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Thomas F. Torrance

THE
WORKS
OF THE
REV. WILLIAM THOM,
LATE MINISTER OF GOVAN,

CONSISTING OF
SERMONS, TRACTS,
LETTERS, &c. &c. &c.

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PART I.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES OF THE DECLINE OF RELIGION.

Preached at the Opening of the Synod of Glasgow and Air, 1761.

*Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present
World.* 2 TIM. IV. 10.

THAT religion is decayed, hath, for a long time, been the general complaint. We cannot see into the hearts of men, so as to make a just estimate of the regard they have to God: we can only judge from their outward behaviour; and in this respect the complaint seems to be but too well founded. Men grow less and less strict in the profession of religion; and the number of those who profess it seems to be gradually diminishing. It is not maintained, that a man can have no devotion and rectitude of heart, if he neglects the forms of religion that are settled or generally esteemed in the country where he lives; but if one has real religion, he will very readily have some profession: and it is also commonly believed, that he who decently professes religion will have more virtue, and be a better member of society, than one who has no such profession. Since, then, an outward profession is presumed to flow from an inward sense of religion;

and since religion is supposed to contribute to the virtue and good order of the world at present, and is confessedly necessary to the happiness of men in the world to come; is it really true that it grows to be less and less in request? and if so, what are the causes of this its decline?

Demas, says the apostle in the text, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world." He is base and infamous, who forsakes his friend from worldly views; he is impious, and in a state of perdition, who forsakes his God and his religion from any views whatever: but, in our times, it is not one only, there are many, who, it is to be feared, have lost the reality, at least they have forsaken the profession, of religion, and have forsaken it, as Demas did, from love and attachment to this present world.

From the text, I might take occasion to observe, that in these corrupted times many have forsaken the profession of religion; and then show, that it is from love to this world that they have done so.

But I almost take it for granted, that men are much less regular in their profession of religion than they were fifty, or even thirty years ago. Is the Sabbath as religiously observed now as it was then? are the churches as much resorted to by people of all ranks, and of every condition? is family-religion as much in fashion? pious aged people behold and lament that there is a very wide and remarkable difference. Could men formerly have undertaken journeys of business upon the Sabbath, or have rode abroad for amusement, or visits of ceremony? could they have transacted their business at home, or met in one another's houses, and spent the hours of public worship in feasting, drinking, and diversion? could they have done these things half a century ago, without being wondered at, and without shocking the world much more than it is at present, when so many are guilty of such rude, unmannerly, and offensive practices? have not

even many of the people who attend our churches, lost the serious and religious air? and do they not too much wear the looks of carelessness, indifference, or levity?

These, and many other things that might be mentioned, are strong indications that a change has happened to the worse; and I presume, that even the profane are convinced that religion has declined. Let us then proceed to what we chiefly intend,—to inquire into the causes of this affecting appearance. I think there is a propriety in the inquiry; if there were no profession of religion, there needed be, and there would be, no public teachers of it.

And as this is a topic which, for ought I know, has not been commonly treated, I trust to the candour of you, my reverend and much esteemed fathers and brethren. If I shall appear to have mistaken views, as it is exceedingly possible I may have; or if I shall advance any thing that is not just, I am under your correction, and my mistakes, whatever they are, shall not, I am sure, be pertinaciously defended or adhered to.

I begin my subject: and I might account for the present irreligion—from the depravity of human nature—from infidelity, or disbelief of religious principles—from a general scepticism, or indifference about religion—or from God's having withdrawn his grace, to punish the world for their profanity and wickedness. But still these very things are appearances that need to be accounted for. From what causes has the world become more wicked of late than it was before, so as to provoke God to withdraw his grace? whence is it, that infidelity, scepticism, and indifference about religion, has grown so fast in the present age? and if it be true, whence is it, that human nature is more depraved in this, than it was in the last generation? These general allegations, whatever truth there may be in them, seem not sufficient to account for the present profaneness and irreligion of men. I

think it becomes us to inquire more minutely into the subject, and to assign, if possible, some more particular and determinate causes of the evil complained of.

Every alteration in the moral world is produced by the agency of God. By his powerful working, men improve in virtue and religion, and by his adorable permission, they become vicious and profane. But, as I take it, every general change of this sort is brought about by the means, or with the concomitancy, of second or external causes. Religion gets footing in a country, when outward circumstances are favourable to its reception; when these outward circumstances are unfavourable, it declines and loses ground.

The outward state of things in this kingdom, at present, bears no friendly aspect to religion: and hence, it is apprehended, the growth of profaneness may, at least in a great measure, be accounted for. The particulars I am going to mention will be too evident symptoms of man's corruption, and his being swayed by the same motive that Demas was—love to a present world.

1st, A long national peace and prosperity have contributed to our throwing religion aside. It may be thought that such blessings should excite thankfulness, and keep religion alive. But thankfulness for the greatest good is but of little force in religion, in comparison of the feeling or fear of great evil. This may be understood, by observing the opposite effects which prosperity and adversity, peace and disturbance, have upon particular persons. When is it that an individual has most religion and most the appearance of it? is it not when he is in outward distress, or when some dreaded calamity hangs over his head? When is it that he is most cool and careless about God? is it not when he is in a state of affluence and ease? When he was afflicted, or when he was terrified at the prospect of worldly trouble, he was serious, and appeared to be so; when the cloud blows over without doing him harm, he turns back to the world, and loses the seri-

ous temper and the serious appearance. Apply this to a whole nation that has long enjoyed prosperity and peace, and it will be evident, how that which affects an individual operates widely, extends its influence, and becomes almost universal. Besides, when there has been for a long time peace and quiet about religion itself, men grow remiss about the profession of it. If a convulsion has been raised in a country, if a people have been threatened with having their religion changed, or violently torn from them, if a toleration of it has been refused, or, if some disputes that are universally interesting have been raised and agitated about it, men will likely, for a long time, be tenacious of their religion, and zealous in professing it. But we have not, for many years, been much in danger of a change of our religion; no force has been used against it, nor have the people interested themselves deeply in any controversy about it, either against the adversaries of revelation from without, or against any particular tenets or opinions among themselves. I suppose that what is here said may be supported by matter of fact, and verified by surveying the state of the world since the commencement of Christianity. A time of peace was ever a time of indolence about religion. When it was not tolerated, or when men were in danger of losing it, they grew the fonder of it. When warm contests were maintained by Christians themselves about it, however these might embitter their spirits, and weaken the power of religion upon their hearts, yet they stuck the faster to the outward profession of it. Not that what is suggested by an eminent French writer is just or true, namely, that religion is so thin a thing, "that it had vanished and melted through our fingers, had it not more upheld itself amongst us, as an instrument of dispute and faction, than by itself." Real religion is not a flimsy, but a firm and solid thing, and every pious man finds it to be so. Thoughtless people have not this reality,

and their profession of religion may be more or less regular from what is now mentioned, and from other external causes.

2d, This is an age wherein commerce flourishes, and riches have greatly increased, and both these, it should seem, are unfriendly even to the profession of religion. A rich man, our Saviour says, shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. At first, they were the poor that came and heard the gospel preached, and not many mighty or noble were obedient to the call of it. Review the history of the planting of religion; they were the poor who received it, they were generally the rich who opposed it. In the poorer cities and nations, it is believed, a greater proportion of the people embraced it. In the richer ones, the greatest numbers were more backward and slow to believe it; and if our own country had been as rich, or as intent on riches, when the gospel was first preached to it, as it is at present, it may be questioned whether or not it would have embraced it. When one is rich, or makes haste to be so, he cares not to give himself any trouble about religion at all; if he is in the keen pursuit of riches, no spiritual thought employs his mind; the God of this world has full possession of his heart; he has little or no sense of religion, and, except it be for some low worldly end, he has no appearance of it. If his fortune is already made, his time and attention are almost as much swallowed up in managing or spending, as they were in acquiring it: he fares sumptuously every day, his mind is enfeebled, his thoughts are dissipated, he wants to make a figure in life, and he is insensible and forgetful of God. Feeling no wants, he asks no blessings; proud of his knowledge, he thinks he need not be told his duty. If, on a rare occasion, he countenances public worship, he declares by his looks that he thinks he is descending from his dignity, and is doing a very humble thing. In short, if he has first professed religion, and then becomes opu-

lent, he loses the sense, and shakes off the profession of it. This certainly is oftentimes the case: nay, as irreligion is an ordinary appendage of riches, there may be some poor enough, and yet so vain as to throw off the air of religion, merely that they may be reputed rich.

I do not affirm that the country in general is in an easy and opulent state: no. The inequality among men is increased, and misery is increased and multiplied in proportion. A few are enriched and live in splendour; many are in straits, striving to live above their circumstances; many are benumbed with constant drudgery and severe toil; their heavy labour and anxiety operate upon them, not like a temporary affliction, but render their minds gross, stupid, and material. Sometimes borne down by the rich, and always by the wretchedness of their condition, they are as the "Ass that coucheth down between two burdens." Their spirits are depressed, and nailed and fixed, as it were, to the earth: many of them have no sense of religion, and as little appearance of it.

And as the rich and great forsake religion, the middle and lower classes of mankind follow them, and are gradually sliding into the same profaneness. They are the nobles, they are the great and opulent, who lead the fashions of the world; they keep religion in repute when they appear to have it; they leave it to be thought a mean and vulgar thing when they forsake it. To a great many of the ordinary people, their very blemishes appear amiable, their vices respectable, and their impiety excusable, or worthy of imitation: so that, in various ways, riches are the cause or occasion of irreligion. We have histories of the course of trade and commerce, and many directions how to get rich; but had we a moral history of riches, that is, of the effects that they invariably produce upon the benevolence and devotion of mankind, I am persuaded we would have set before our eyes a more dark

and unpleasing theory than perhaps we imagine. 'The friends of religion might be amazed at it.

3d, Men forsake religion, because their honour and worldly interest are so little connected with the profession of it. If the thing were esteemed honourable, if a man's reputation were firmly established by it, if it were a sure mean by which he could rise in the army or in the state, he might be a hypocrite, but he would doubtless be a very decent professor: but no such profession is necessary to be a general, or a statesman, or a judge, or a member of the legislative body of the kingdom. And as men gain little or nothing by a religious profession, neither are they in danger of losing any thing by the want of it. One's profaneness brings little disrespect upon him; he is hardly the worse received in any company, and it puts him in no danger of losing any part of his fortune. In the time of Charles I. many of our great people, we are told, crowded to church, with a demure countenance, and a mighty serious air: not chiefly, I suppose, because that prince was attempting an alteration of the established religion; that, indeed, alarmed the lower sort; but the great were alarmed, because the king was revoking the grants to the tithes and churchlands which they were in possession of. Hence their zealous profession, that they might be supported by the clergy and the people, and so enabled to crush the king's measures, and preserve and secure what they had got. While the danger lasted, their profession seemed edifying; when the storm was over, it relaxed prodigiously.

I am not contending that religious profession ought always to be rewarded with lucrative offices, or places of honour and trust: but if religion is esteemed to be of any importance, I should think, that when competitors for an office are nearly alike in virtue and ability, the decent religious man ought to be preferred. This might gently bend the world to think more favourably of religion.

Still less am I urging that religion ought to be enforced by civil laws. It is of a spiritual nature, and is best promoted by spiritual motives. When, in a late reign, there were laws compelling men to go to church under severe penalties, timorous people would then profess religion, and the assemblies might be thronged with the poor, and even with the rich. A remedy desperate and ineffectual! and which could never have been thought of but by those who were either ignorant of the spirit of religion, and the sacred rights of conscience, or who wanted to trample upon the liberties of mankind, and enthrall them in a dreadful yoke of slavery. By the way, one cannot but wonder, that some ingenious men, in the present age, who discover no liking to religious profession, seem to applaud these or the like measures as wholesome severities: measures! which, were they now to be pursued, themselves would be the first to feel and lament the rigour of them. When the ablest men take upon them to defend or palliate such absurdities in government, they undertake a task which no man is equal to.

But as such laws are altogether wrong, so in the present age they would be more absurd and ineffectual than ever. They would be directly opposite to the genius of the times, to the manners and fashions of the country: every body would dislike them, and the general bias is so strong towards licentiousness and irreligion, that such laws would destroy themselves. The execution of them would be utterly impracticable.

4th, 'The knowledge men have, or think they have, attained in religion, may be mentioned as a cause of their irreligion. I do not maintain it as a certain point, that there is more real learning, or a greater number of thorough inquirers, in this age than there were in the last. But a kind of easy and superficial knowledge seems to have become more general; and men soon come to think they have got enough of religious knowledge. But there is a great mistake that

cannot be got driven out of the minds of most of our people: They fancy the great or only end of going to church is to hear sermon, and get instruction; and yet is it not evident, that the chief end of it is to worship God in a public and a social manner! There seems, in this respect, to be more propriety in the style said to be used in a neighbouring church, than that which is in fashion among ourselves. They ask, where are you going to prayers? and we, where are you to hear sermon?

5th, The plain and scriptural way in which religion is taught in this church, does, I believe, diminish the number of its professors. It is a great imperfection of mankind, that many of them care little to hear things which they are capable of knowing, and which, when known, are likely to be of most advantage to them. They like well to hear of some dark points, and abstruse speculations. These were, perhaps, rather too much insisted on in the last age; but towards that extreme, I am of opinion, the present age, in general, have not erred. They have, I apprehend, rather lost their influence with the people, by preaching in a rational and practical manner. Strange! that it should so happen. Shall I be thought to derogate from the common sense of mankind, by alleging it? I fear, however, it is the case. Is it not to be lamented, that the pure religion of the new testament, undorned with pomp, and unmixed with superstition, does not take a deeper hold of the groveling minds of corrupted men—is not more likely to be popular, and to continue to be so? One thing I am sorry to advance; that it happened in some places, that the genuine religion of Jesus could not be received, till something human was blended with it, or adjoined to it, to adapt it to the notions of ignorant and worldly men. It was this, alas! that first gave rise to the absurdities of popery, and to all the inventions of men, in the worship of God. The church historians tell us, that

some of the ancient fathers were so weak, as to institute rites, and sports, and festivals, very like those which had been long in use, to prevail on the idolatrous and stupid people, to renounce heathenism, and embrace the gospel.

The religion, established and taught in this church, has, I believe, less of human invention, and less mixture of superstition, than perhaps any other establishment; and yet something, similar to what I have just mentioned, has, I fear, been formerly practised; I mean, a studying not always to deliver the ideas of scripture, pure and unmixed, but to accommodate them to the wishes and expectation of the hearers. What pity that there should be any occasion to do this! or that any teacher should strive thus "to please men!" What pity is it, that preaching the gospel of Christ, in its native simplicity, should make men dislike it, and forsake it! and yet this is sometimes the fact. The doctrines of the gospel are sublime, interesting, and comfortable; the purest morality is founded upon them, and recommended by them. If this morality is explained; if the vices, so often condemned in the new testament, are insisted on and exposed; if you descend to particulars, and show, that swearing, perjury, covetousness, lying, fraud, injustice, oppression, pride, intemperance, and debauchery, are inconsistent with the Christian character; if you enjoin, as our great Master has commanded, the necessity of devotion, of justice, of restitution, of truth, of meekness, of temperance, of self-denial, of brotherly-love and charity, the people yawn and hear you with disgust; they go away, and like not to return to hear such doctrine.

The theatre is thronged to, by the power of an artful, a bewitching, and dangerous adulation. It is said to be a picture of the passions, and vices, and follies of men: but to get a crowded house, the painters are forced to condemn the vices which the audience have

not, and to flatter and foment those they have. If they painted to the life the temper and the vices of those who resort to them, they would soon be offended, and withdraw, unwilling to be mortified with the view of their real selves. How dreadful, if ever the pulpit should be debased in this manner! or should ever verge towards any art of that kind! One had better never preach at all, or cry in a desert, than be guilty of any such gross and criminal prostitution.

6th, The want of pomp and show in our manner of worship, tends perhaps to diminish the number of professors. From the first establishment of our constitution, the public services of religion have been done with much simplicity, and without any thing of glare; nothing to strike the senses or entertain the imagination of the worshippers. Not that I imagine there is any value in that worship which is altogether occasioned by outward show: no. It is the spirituality of worship which gives it value. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." But where the right inward principle is weak or wanting, external things may have some influence on religious profession. And I believe our worship is less attractive, or at least is performed in less decent places, than might at first be intended. This proceeds from the selfishness of the age, and their backwardness to be at any expence about sacred things. Churches have been erected and endowed by the piety of our forefathers, in the times of poverty and simplicity: had these things been left to this age of riches and commerce, it may be very questionable whether or not they would ever have been done. We might have had none or fewer places of public worship, and instead of the scanty provisions for the teachers of righteousness, there might have been no such provisions at all.

The attachment of a country to religion may, in general, be estimated from the state and condition of

its religious buildings. When men are under the power of devotion, well or ill directed, they scruple not at any expence in this matter: when they are cool and irreligious, they can be at none. The magnificence of such buildings, as it flows from a respect to religion, it tends also to preserve that respect. Men were formerly affected with external objects just as we now are. We look with a solemn and religious awe upon the grand and stately edifice within which I now stand; with a like veneration we behold the vast and magnificent ruins of many such domes and structures throughout the country. Our churches, in general, are diminutive objects, and have nothing striking about them. I believe there is no Christian country where these are in so sorry a state. They ought to bear some proportion to the splendour of the age, and to the public and private buildings in present use. But men live luxuriously "in their ceiled houses, while the house of God lies waste." This is both a proof of our irreligion, and it is also a cause of it. Have men religion? why, then, are the temples of the living God in ruin? why are the worshipping places in such a state of nastiness and disrepair? why in many places does it cost such a struggle to get them repaired in the cheap, the coarse, and slovenly manner in which they are? though there are laws long since made, and still in force for such reparations. Do not the bulk of mankind conclude at once that religion must be of very small importance, when they see the rich and great, who are reputed wise, so averse to be at any expence about it? do they not from this cause think slightly of religion, and turn indifferent about professing it? and do not the aged and delicate, and the people of better fashion, "forsake the assembling of themselves?" avowedly declaring, that our churches are so shattered and cold, that they endanger their health; so foul and ruinous, that they are nauseous and offensive to them; and that they want

a more neat and better sheltered place to worship God in.

7th, I add, that religion is less professed, because of the low appointments of its teachers. I am not ashamed to say it, because I believe and know it to be true, that the poor provisions of clergymen are a cause that the profession of religion declines. These provisions, in the cheap and plain times they were modified, and for many years after, might be sufficient or tolerable, especially when there were superadded to them the effects of the generosity which was then in fashion; but they are far from being so in this rich, expensive, and selfish age.

In every nation, that is what we call civilised, the ideas of contempt and of ignorance are inseparable from poverty, and the idea of knowledge is connected with riches. "This wisdom (says Solomon,) have I seen under the sun, and it seemed great unto me: there was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built bulwarks against it: and there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then said I, wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard." Agreeably to this ancient observation, the sentiments of all men, and especially of the rich, are, What sense can you expect from one, who has so little to spend, who entertains so few, who fares so simply, and is so coarsely dressed? This has been long the common train of thinking; but never more so, perhaps never so much so as in the present times. It is wealth that procures respect; little matter whether it be derived from ancestors, or suddenly acquired, or got by means right or wrong; the man possessed of it is held in honour; it gives him the reputation of wisdom and knowledge. The clergy are poor, and therefore supposed to be ig-

norant; how can it, the world thinks, be worth the while to go to a place of worship, where a low and ignorant person leads in the service! This, I believe, is the silent reasoning of very great numbers. Hence it is in part, as well as from the causes mentioned above, that those who are nearly upon a level with us, or not far above us, in their circumstances and way of living, have commonly a decent profession, and resort to our churches: those who are wealthy and abound in riches, have, in many places, almost totally deserted us. They imagine that, as they have more riches, they have likewise got more knowledge than their teachers; or they are ashamed to join in worship with, or seem to have their duty told them by those who are so very far below them. Some time ago an attempt was made for a remedy, very inadequate to the last mentioned cause of irreligion: but though little was sought, nothing was obtained; and it is likely no remedy may be thought of till it shall be too late; and then, as in other cases, the wonder may be, that a thing so obviously necessary was so long neglected. Ah for the days of ancient simplicity! when virtue was practised, and religion was in fashion; when men were not yet civilised into atheism, covetousness, and ferocity of temper; when riches had not jostled out the sentiments of humanity and devotion; and when men were more afraid of being cruel and profane than of being poor, or appearing to be so.

There is still another thing which may be it is expected I should mention. Some weak and well-meaning people, joined and perhaps set on by others of a different cast, would be very willing to ascribe all the growing profaneness and irreligion to the clergy themselves; lamenting, that the ministers of the last age were much purer and better than we are. That the clergy may be in part blameable, may be owned. We never pretended to be perfect; and no man of

just discernment will expect, that we alone shall be totally exempted from the influence of these causes which tend to slackening the profession of religion : but I will be bold to affirm, that the present clergy of Scotland, in general, are as unblemished in their lives, have as much purity and regularity of manners, and are possessed of as wide an extent of knowledge of things human and divine, as any equal number of church-men of like fortunes in the known world : nay, I will farther say, that there are many of them, who, in point of ability, are no ways inferior to those who are eminent in the other learned professions in the nation. Their regularity in preaching, and diligence in their other ministerial labours, are well known ; and if it will give any ease and quiet to the complainers, I believe I can assure them, that, at the distance of a century hereafter, the present generation of ministers will be just as much esteemed and regretted as these now are who have lived a hundred years before them. “A prophet (it is said) has not honour in his own country,” and he may also miss of it in his own time.

To all the above causes, the operation of which is so visible and so certain, we may subjoin, that there are perhaps some who are wickedly active to promote impiety ; who labour, by their loose and worldly speeches, to push forward the irreligion of the age. Are there really some “ presumptuous and self-willed, who strive to beguile unstable souls, and seek to turn away men from the faith,” by questioning the certainty, and vilifying the importance of divine revelation ? are there some, who, having their hearts entirely set on this world, call upon others to neglect religion, and to pursue riches and honours as the chief or the only portion of man ? are there some voluptuous persons, who are busy to exterminate all sense and profession of religion, to lessen the horror of vice, to irritate the passions of men, and “ to allure, through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those

who were almost escaped from them that live in error?" To any such person, might not one speak in the spirited and awful words of the great apostle Paul to Elymas the forcerer, "O full of all subtilty and of all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" Behold the hand of God is lifted up above thy head; instead of being struck at the sight of thy fellow-creatures hurrying to the pit of destruction, wilt thou, as by a forcible arm, drive them into it? Stop, reverence thy God, pity thy perishing brethren, and prevent the dreadful ruin of thine own immortal soul.

I have done—I have mentioned what appear to me to be some of the causes or occasions of our irreligion; causes mostly arising from the present state and circumstances of the world: Through a long prosperity, men are become indolent and thoughtless—Riches engross their affections, and consume their time—the grave professor meets with no honour or advantage above the profane—the public services of religion are performed with an unattracting simplicity—and the teachers of it are poorly supported and despised.

It is not easy to find a remedy that shall prove effectual against this growing evil. In other cases, it is said, that when the nature and causes of the disease are once explored, it becomes easy to prescribe the cure. I wish it were so in the case before us. But I violently suspect, that before religion can be professed with that decency and regularity which it merits, there must first be a great alteration in the outward state of things (an alteration neither expected nor desired), and still as great a one in the hearts of men. I fear that we can hardly expect, in our times, either that humanity or that regard to God which were the true characteristics of the plain and unpolished ages long since past. But nothing is impossible with God.

The most certain and specific antidote against profaneness, in opposition to so many causes which accelerate its course, would be, "to live by faith and not by sight:" I mean, to live in the habitual and overpowering belief of the reality, and of all the terrors and glories of the invisible world: and we ought to have this faith strong, in proportion to the striking objects and causes that labour to seduce us. By vigorous and repeated efforts, we ought to keep eternity full in our view, that we may be proof against the powerful contagion and fallacious charms of the present world. If we have the reality of religion, how can we miss to have the appearance of it! "If we have that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;" this will counter-work the causes that operate towards irreligion. "For this is that victory that overcometh the world, even our faith: and, who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the son of God."

But I do not know how; we seem very much to want this faith. While we complain that religion has decayed, we are but half in earnest. We are at the same time, perhaps with more keenness, wishing and praying for a still greater influx of wealth into our country: wealth! which has already rendered us covetous and rapacious, has debauched our morals, erased religion out of our hearts, and left us but little of the outward semblance of it. How far we think and wish consistently, if we have faith, and look upon eternity as our chief concern; how far it is possible to unite the keen commercial spirit and the spirit of devotion, I will not determine.

One thing I am sure of, that a constant and lively exercise of faith is necessary to resist the temptations of the present world. The air we breathe in, the company we talk with, is infectious; knowledge, virtue, religion, if detached from riches, are despised;

an avidity of riches appears in the air, the looks, the words of every one; nothing, nothing is commended but that which tends to stifle devotion, and wear off the appearance of it. Serious people stand by, see and lament the disregard that is shown to religion; and themselves are caught hold of, and carried downwards by the current of fashion, as if it were by the resistless force of a swelled and impetuous river. How often have I seen a man lament and abhor the danger of such or such a lucrative employment to the morals and religion of our youth; and yet, overborne by the stream of custom, and tempted by the love of the world, put his own son to it! We can never withstand such force, and be firm in our religion, but by the energy of faith. We will prize our integrity, be content to be less rich, less regarded, and even to suffer affliction, if we have the unshaken belief and hope of a happy immortality. This is the faith that supported Moses. "By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt—for he had respect to the recompence of the reward."

My reverend fathers and brethren, I hardly choose to make any address to you, founded on the things I have advanced. In a profane and corrupted age, you know the nature and importance of your pastoral office; you do more; with firmness, and fidelity, and great labour, you discharge it. If the things delivered were just, you can well make these conclusions which may assist you to persevere in your integrity, your steadfastness, and your useful endeavours to stem the torrent of irreligion. If your spirit is stirred in you at the coolness and indifference of the world; if you are grieved that many "forsake the assembling of themselves;" if you are afflicted at the growth of

profaneness and irreligion; if yourselves are unjustly loaded with the blame of that profaneness; if you have but poor appointments in proportion to your usefulness, your great labour, and what ought to be your rank in society—you have the peace of your own mind, the testimony of a good conscience, and the assured hopes of being one day with that Jesus whom you serve, and by whose faith you live. “In all things approve yourselves as the ministers of God. In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold ye live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing; as poor, and yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”—“After all, it is but a little while, and ye shall have fulfilled the ministry which ye have received of the Lord. The end of all things is at hand, and the fashion of this world passeth away.” In this interval, let the words of your compassionate and heavenly Master give you courage and consolation. “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace; in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

I very shortly address myself to you, the people that are present. My brethren, many, like Demas, have from worldly causes forsaken the profession of religion. Will you follow their example? will you suffer yourselves to be carried headlong by the fashions of a profane and backsliding generation? where the faith of Jesus is preached in purity, will you be offended at the simplicity of the worship, or the seve-

rity of the duties the gospel enjoins, or the low condition of its teachers, or because no worldly honour or gain is annexed to a religious profession? As Jesus said to his disciples, after many had gone back, and walked no more with him, "will ye also go away?" I am persuaded, that, notwithstanding the low ebb of religion, there are many of you who can answer with sincerity, and with a zeal like that of Simon Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go but unto thee; thou hast the words of eternal life, and we know, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

Let me beseech you, who profess religion, to live suitably to it. If you are as unjust and hard-hearted, as covetous and close-handed, as cruel and oppressive, as those who have no profession, you might as well throw aside the mantle too. You profess religion, and you practise wickedness; your temper and your actions are not hid from the discerning world; and I do not know but your wickedness is one of the great causes of irreligion. Profane men see, that, whatever you profess, your conduct, and the motives of it, are as base as their own; and you become the wretched means of hardening them in their profaneness. Let there be no ground for any such charge against you: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works," may honour and profess religion, "and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

To conclude: let us all address our prayers to the throne of grace, that God may pour down his Spirit to check the progress of irreligion, and revive his work, in these years, "when the love of many has waxed cold;" that the exalted redeemer may "ride forth gloriously, conquering and to conquer;" that his arrows may sharply pierce the hearts of men, and bring them in subjection unto himself; that the Almighty Spirit of grace may take hold of the hearts of men, and that this may appear by their upright prac-

tice and serious profession ; particularly, that God may enable us to be so influenced by faith, that we may never forsake religion through the love of this present world.

“ Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy ; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and ever. Amen.”

SERMON II.

SOBER AND RELIGIOUS CONFERENCE CONSIDERED AND RECOMMENDED.

Preached at the Ordination of the Rev. Mr. JOHN BURNS, 1774.

WITH THE CHARGE.

Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it : and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.

And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels ; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.

MAL. iii. 16, 17, 18.

REASON and speech are the two principal faculties by which mankind are distinguished from the animal creation ; by the use of reason we find out truth, and by speech we communicate it to others.

And our nature seems to be so formed, that just reasoning enableth us to speak distinctly, and social conversation brightens and improves the faculty of reasoning.

As this is the case, an inquisitive person may, from the bare esteem of knowledge, desire to converse with others ; the serious and well-disposed will, moreover, desire that exercise, because conference, if properly conducted, is an excellent mean of regulating our affections, and of improvement in the spiritual life.

To confer together, was therefore the habitual custom of those serious persons mentioned in the text, "Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another:" Then, when the Jewish church was exceedingly corrupted: They had lately been delivered from a tedious captivity, but they soon transgressed the commandments, and despised the ordinance of their Deliverer. Their words "were shout against the Lord:" They said, "it is vain to serve God, and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?" They called the proud happy; yea "they that worked wickedness were set up," advanced to worldly honour and riches; yea "they that tempted God" by heinous sins were delivered, delivered from the punishment which their crimes deserved: for even then, the judges were partial in their decisions, and "caused many to stumble at the law;" and therefore God threatens "to come near to them to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the forcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that defraud the hireling in his wages, and that oppress the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts." Such was the profaneness, the profligacy, and iniquity of the Jews, in that corrupted age; but there was still a number who feared the Lord; that is, who were sincerely religious, who were influenced by the authority of God, and studied to do his will: It is not to be doubted, that these would be at all possible pains to reclaim the impious, the debauched, and unjust, among whom they lived; but they were especially careful to fortify their own minds under the hardships they suffered; to confirm one another in religion and goodness; to strengthen their resolution against the dangerous infection of vice; to have their understandings further improved in knowledge, and their hearts

deeper engaged in the love and practice of their duty. It was with these views, we may safely presume, that they "who feared the Lord, spake often one to another."

On occasions of this sort, we have had many good sermons on the excellency of the gospel, the utility of public instructors, the duty of a minister, the doctrines he ought to believe, and the method by which he should convey these doctrines into the minds of his hearers.

My design in this discourse is to mention some of the advantages which Christians tolerably enlightened, as the ministers of this Church generally are, may obtain by conversing often and freely with one another, while they have the fear of God before them, and keep within the boundaries of decency and good manners. What I am to deliver may, I think, merit some attention from students and younger brethren; and I hope it may also be profitable to those of my other hearers, who are disposed to weigh its importance, and to behave accordingly. I will not inquire any further, whether the text be the properest foundation for the remarks I am going to make, nor shall I be very solicitous about the order in which I offer these remarks.—To begin then; I think it manifest,

1st, That by free conversation, an ability of reasoning justly, is best and most successfully acquired: "Neither the laboured treatises of the learned, nor the set discourses of the eloquent, are able of themselves to teach the use of reason: it is the habit alone of reasoning that can make a reasoner; and men can never be better invited to the habit, than when they find pleasure in it." Nor can they ever so really find that pleasure which invites and guides to the habit of reasoning, as by conversing with their friends. To teach us to think and reason, dry rules and directions were long ago prescribed; and some people have, from age to age,

attempted to bring them in fashion : but do they who insist upon the utility of these rules, and know them best, reason always with the greatest accuracy ? Are not their reasonings commonly as vague, as feeble and incoherent, as those of untutored, and undisciplined people ? The rules may be exact enough, and if one can reason already, they may assist him to detect quibbles, and from being imposed upon by the jargon of words, or the specious sophistry of argument : but one may safely venture to affirm, that, to this day, these rules have never, in any instance, taught the young mind to reason correctly. It was indeed the height of folly to expect that they could ever have that effect. Is a child taught to walk by speeches and directions from his nurse ? Or, is a person taught to swim, by full and accurate discourses upon the whole art of swimming ? It is incontestibly by exercise and habit, that the first is taught to walk and the other to swim : and, in like manner, it is by reasoning that a habit of reasoning justly is acquired. Conversation whetters the mind ; and, as “ iron sharpeneth iron, so doth a man the mind and countenance of his friend.” For,

2d, Frequent conference with one another, hath a strong and direct tendency to improve the mind in human and divine knowledge ; perhaps a stronger tendency than any thing else. In comparison of it, or at least without being assisted by it, the study of books is but a languid and fruitless affair. Conference warms us, it exerciseth us, and at the same time instructs us. When we confer with a sensible man, he presseth hard upon us, he woundeth us on every side, his imagination raiseth up ours to a more than ordinary pitch : stimulated by jealousy, by glory, by contention, we are elevated to something above ourselves : the soul is roused from its lethargy, and all its strength is exerted : the air, the looks and countenance of him we converse with, keep it on the stretch : and, frequently, before one word hath been said on a subject

about which we were in the dark, we have a clearer and fuller view of it than ever we had formerly : light breaks in suddenly upon the mind, before our fellow-inquirer hath so much as spoken ; and in a manner which is real, and felt, though I confess not easily or shortly to be explained, we see and know at once what we wonder we did not see before.—In the progress of the conference, the difficulty is proposed, the question is stated, a cloud of words which hide the subject is removed, the simple truth appears, clear and striking views of it become obvious, the mind is enlightened, we acquire new and valuable knowledge, and rejoice in the new and pleasing acquisition. We may weary ourselves in poring over many bulky and tiresome volumes for months or years, and not attain so much real knowledge as we might receive with pleasure in a few hours by a spirited conversation with a man of judgment ; and why should we depend on books only for that knowledge, the seeds of which we have within ourselves ; seeds which may be cherished by conversing with our friends, and gradually nurtured up to maturity by the counter-warmth of impartial and friendly debate.

That by conference we may acquire the most clear and distinct view of things, I might further show by many particular considerations: for instance, read over to a child any story, read it to him in the plainest manner, he doth not, he cannot understand it ; tell me, he says, what it is you have read : Speak it over to him face to face, as in familiar conversation, and he then understands it at once. The case is much the same with men, whether in early or in mature years: by familiar conversation they apprehend things the most easily ; by the living language their attention is attracted, and a clearer and more distinct notion of a subject is conveyed to them than they are able to receive from books where that same subject is fully and perhaps methodically treated. Besides, there is sci-

ence, which, if we have either discovered ourselves, or if we have got it in books only, we cannot all at once depend upon it: It may seem very plausible; it is new to us, and it is entertaining; but we hesitate to embrace it hastily; we suspect it may be erroneous, till, having consulted our more enlightened friends, we find what is its sterling value by the touch-stone of conversation. This hath often been experienced by inquisitive persons in the younger time of life.

I have said that conference is an excellent means of attaining knowledge; I think also that it puts a person in the fairest way to be convinced of his erroneous opinions, and to part with them. It oftentimes happens, that, when one studies in solitude, he embraceth wild and fantastical opinions; conversation opens his views, and gives his faculties a vigorous play; it puts him upon turning his notions on every side, and holds them up to a light which discovers those mistakes that might have remained hid from him in the gloom and obscurity of retirement. Enlightened by debating with his friends, he is convinced, that, by a bias to which indeed all men are liable, he had bended his opinions to suit his inclinations; he candidly renounceth these opinions, and cheerfully submits to the striking evidence of truth.

I add, that the knowledge acquired and improved by conference is the most methodical, the most profitable, and it sticks the fastest with us. What we get by reading, unless we recollect and converse it over, is oftentimes almost as soon forgotten as read; and I believe every one will find, upon reflection, that the most valuable parts of knowledge he is possessed of, have been acquired, not so much by books as in company, or he was set in pursuit of it by hints from some friend, or he applied to it with a view to make a proper figure in company, and conversation hath convinced him of its value, hath enabled him to digest it into order, and of course hath made him to remember

it. I do not deny that there are many who by reading have attained a great variety of knowledge; but commonly it is a dark, a jumbled and confused knowledge: they know, but they know without a method and without a plan; their thoughts are unconnected, and their knowledge undigested. This confusion in thinking may be partly owing to other causes, but it is unquestionably, in a great measure, owing to this, that these poring scholars have been too seldom in company, they have not, by conference, learned to arrange their thoughts in a proper order. When I say this, I suppose, as I have all along done, that those who may hope to improve their minds by conference, have a real desire of knowledge, and are careful both to read and to meditate in their retirements. To seek for improvement in solitude and company alternately, is the proper way to increase our stock of knowledge, and to have distinct views of things. The knowledge which is acquired in our ordinary companies at least, (and not in those of scholars) is commonly superficial: Knowledge acquired by reading only, may be deep and various, but it is, for the most part, apt to be somewhat confused. These are high acquirements,—accuracy in reasoning,—advancement in knowledge,—conviction of our mistakes,—method and order in thought and expression,—keeping the best knowledge upon the memory,—which may all be had or greatly improved by conference. Should not this prospect engage us to speak often one to another? To acquire knowledge should be the aim of every man, and particularly it should be the aim of ministers of the Gospel. Whatever business a person is engaged in, he ought to be intent on making improvements in it. In companies, the farmer talks about husbandry, the merchant about trade, the politician about schemes of government, the soldier about encampments, about sieges, and battles, and retreats; different artificers, each about new and further improvements in his re-

spective business. Shall enlightened Christians, shall ministers of the Gospel seek for no further increase in human and divine knowledge? Shall they alone remain in a drowsy and torpid state? Shall they rest satisfied, as if they had already attained perfection either in knowledge or in practice?

Next to our proneness to sin, I cannot help thinking that what we have most to regret, is, that we have not been early set upon the right road to pursue knowledge. The misfortune, I believe, is pretty general: I am sure there are many who think and feel that they have great reason to lament and complain of it. What an unbounded prospect, what an extensive field of knowledge lies before us; a field rich with every thing that is useful, and pleasing, and ornamental to the mind of man; a field, of which great parts are, it is likely, never to be trodden by us; some of which, at least, we might with pleasure have surveyed, had we been timeously set upon the right track. Is there no remedy, is there no way to retrieve this misfortune, at least in some degree? Must we check our natural, our strong desire of knowledge? Must we be content to remain for ever fixed in the same ignorance? If there is a remedy at all, it must be fetched, in a great measure, from a friendly and spirited intercourse with one another. Travellers to the same, or different parts of the world, use to compare the observations they make. Why should not men, who travel in the intellectual world, if I may so speak; who are in pursuit of the same, or different parts of knowledge, do the same? Why should they not, in this sense, be willing to communicate and willing also to learn? And may not he who justly values his great and improved talents, learn something even from those who differ from him, and who, in many respects, are confessedly inferior to him? Men choose commonly to associate with those who are believed to be of the same opinions with themselves; but to con-

verse with those who are known to differ from us is a better method, both to find out truth and to increase in knowledge: As by the collision of hard bodies fire is generated, so, by the opposition of sentiments in debate, reason is sharpened, and truth investigated. Decency in contradicting is to be observed; but amongst those who know one another, and converse together for mutual improvement, there is no great occasion for much ceremony. Much ceremony mars the purpose, and is indeed nauseous. One would rather choose to frequent the company of those who oppose and ruffle him, than of those who are scrupulously afraid to contradict him. It is a dull and hurtful pleasure to have to do with that sort of literary people, who, instead of correcting our notions, insipidly smile in our face, seem to admire us, and to approve of every thing we say. I proceed to mention,

3d, Another advantage derived from conference, or "speaking often to one another;" which is, That it confirms or restores good agreement, harmony, and peace. The cause of dryness and discord amongst us is commonly either a suspicion of wrong principles, or of some great blemish in moral character: these suspicions, when happily they are little more than suspicions, will be either completely removed, or at least gradually weakened by conversation and acquaintance.

We suspect one another either of wild and enthusiastic, or of lax and unsound principles. Most certainly we ought to be at the utmost pains to have sound principles in religion and morality, forming all these principles by the scriptures of truth; but though we strive ever so honestly to do so, it is impossible that the thoughts of thinking men, on some abstruse points, can be quite alike, and run exactly in the same channel. It is great weakness to expect this; it is great folly and unreasonable severity to urge it: and when civil or ecclesiastical rulers strictly press an uniformity of belief, they counterwork their own design; by

exacting too much, they gain nothing at all; nay, they drive men into hypocrisy or scepticism. There is, perhaps, no religious society where the doctrine established is less sincerely believed, than in that very society which imposeth an absolute necessity of receiving implicitly, and believing blindly, whatsoever it hath assumed the authority to declare sound and orthodox. A thinking person can never resign his understanding so entirely as to allow himself to be guided like a beast, wheresoever those in authority shall please to lead him. Rulers may by commands direct our external actions; but they play the fool, the bigot, the tyrant, when they command us to believe. If a few hundreds of studious persons were possessed of a precise sameness of belief in every point of doctrine, this would be a wonderful thing indeed; if it did exist, it would be in the judgment of a superior Being, a greater miracle than ever was exhibited. Consult the history of the Christian Church, the history of Popish countries, and you will find that the rigorous imposing and exacting a strict sameness of belief hath commonly produced scepticism, infidelity, loathing at religion, and sometimes, I fear, atheism itself. In this respect, therefore, very considerable latitude hath been allowed in well regulated societies, Jewish and Christian: but perhaps we of this reformed Church differ less in our manner of thinking than in our turn of expression; or, if some do really differ, the difference is overlooked, and passeth for nothing, whilst they keep up a manly familiarity and friendly acquaintance. Did it ever happen, that a man was severe against the heterodoxy of one with whom he kept up a good understanding? Was it ever known, that a friend was extremely disgusted with the principles of his friend, whilst the friendship lasted? The misfortune is, we first suspect a man's principles, and then we avoid him; we avoid him still, and the suspicion grows; we pore upon, and it sticks fast with-

us. Had men of seemingly different opinions always met and explained themselves, their differences, at least in material points, would very often have appeared to be much about words, and many idle wranglings and disputes which have made so much noise in the world, and swelled the heavy volumes of ancient and modern times, would, to the unspeakable advantage and honour of Christianity, never have been heard of.

To "speak often one to another" doth also procure mutual peace, as it removes secret grudges, and the suspicions we are apt to entertain about the moral character of one another. A man's sincerity, or the purity of his morals, are often suspected when there is little or no ground for any such suspicion; we have been misinformed, and have taken up an ill report against him; our not having acquaintance with him is the cause why we think ill of him; when we come to know a little above the springs of his actions, and the tenour of his conduct, we often discover our mistake, and begin to think better of him. We are scared at a man's supposed temper and vices; we converse with him, and our fear abates. Oftentimes the vices and defects which those we are strangers to are charged with, are like those objects which appear deformed and terrible at a distance, but, when we have approached them, their deformity and terribleness disappear. How common a thing is it to entertain a bad opinion of men, which, upon a little acquaintance, we see was groundless! This happens every day, and it should make us cautious and slow to think ill of any person with whom we are but little acquainted; and if we have ill thoughts of him, we should try if they may not be removed, by striking up an acquaintance, and conversing with him. I proceed,

4th, Another great advantage which the fearers of God derive from conference, is, growth and improvement in the spiritual life. To this end it must indeed be wisely conducted: The words we hear in conver-

sation, have a surprising influence upon the turn of the mind, the feelings of the heart, and our behaviour in life. How often hath an impure hint, perhaps unmeaningly thrown out, polluted the mind of the hearer, given rise or growth to disorderly appetites or passions, which have soon after been exerted into action, and issued in his remorse and shame. When this happens to be the case, hath not the unwary speaker reason of deep mourning and regret, and hath not the unfortunate hearer reason to repent that ever he was in such company, though it may have been that of his near relations or intimate friends? Might it not be an effectual check to all such dangerous conversation, did the speaker pause a little, and consider, What mischief may this word, this story occasion? What sin may be committed in the consequence of it? What shame, what punishment may some unstable person be brought to suffer by it?—How often also, and I speak it with pleasure, how often hath a simple hint raised and cherished the devout and friendly affections,—caught hold of a man who was tottering, and just upon the verge of falling into some foul transgression, been the means of establishing him in virtue, and fixing him in a laudable and Christian course of action? Hath not many a man felt the emotions of gratitude stirring in his breast, by being put in mind of God's loving kindness toward him? Even an accidental expression concerning the excellency of religion, and the surpassing love of Jesus, or concerning the dignity, the reality, and beauty of virtue, amidst all the present corruption and dissipation of the world, is often not without effect. It awakens in the soul admiration and love to God; it kindles a warm desire of virtue in the heart of the hearer, and cherishes that same desire in the heart of the speaker. How often hath soft persuasion pacified wrath, and stemmed the impetuous tide of passion! How often hath it excited pity and commiseration, and allayed the

boisterous intention of revenge and cruelty ! How often have the words and countenance of a friend cooled the boilings of passion, made a person to controul his criminal desires, to alter his purpose, and preserve his innocence ! How beautiful, how forcible and salutary are such right words, how studiously to be spoken, how faithfully to be remembered ! “ A wholesome tongue is a tree of life ;—a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver ;—the words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened in sure places by the masters of the assemblies ; let therefore no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying ; be ye filled with the Spirit, speaking among yourselves mutually ; let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another.”

Were we disposed to so salutary an exercise, we could be at no loss for materials to converse upon, which have a direct tendency to our mutual improvement in the spiritual life,—to warm our hearts with the love of God, and with the love of one another, to give us the command of our passions, and to bend us to the practice of righteousness. Might we not discourse on the nature and beauty of every Christian virtue, the obligations to the practice of it, derived from the light of nature, and the farther obligations to it, from the Gospel of Christ ? By this means, would we not learn to have clear and precise notions of every virtue, and would we not be the better able to recommend virtue, in all its particular branches, to the choice and pursuit of one another ? Would not serious conversation on such subjects, cherish the devout affections, inspire us with the love of God, and teach us resignation to his will ? Did we in the fear of God, “ speak often one to another,” concerning the compassion and love of Christ to a perishing world, would not our hearts burn within us, whilst we meditated and spoke of him ? Would not our faith in him

be strengthened, our love increased, and our hearts inflamed with a strong desire to resemble and obey him? By conversing about the glories of the other world, would we not learn to bear with contentment the ills of this life, and to become more indifferent with respect to its transient joys? Would we not by divine grace, behave in the whole of our conduct, as "seeing him who is invisible?" Would we not believe and feel the eternal world to be as real as if we already beheld it with our eyes? and would we not gradually be more and more influenced by that "faith which is the substance of things not seen, and the evidence of things hoped for?" And would we not have to say, from comfortable experience, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith?" In short, by serious and religious conference, what great improvements in goodness might we make? Would we not become better men and better Christians, advancing to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ?—Edified by different friends, we would have it to say, in imitation of the virtuous and thoughtful Roman emperor, "From this man I first learned to think reverently of God, and of his righteous administration; from that man I learned submission to the will of providence, and the art of contentment in every condition of life: By one, I was taught to have a relish for the beauty of manners, to perceive the dignity and reality of virtue, and the beauty of holiness; by another, I was taught, through divine grace, to bridle my passions, to be easily reconciled to those who had offended me, to set a due value upon the virtues of others, to make allowance for their imperfections, and sincerely to love them: By the great pains which one friend took upon me, my mind was gradually opened, and at length I had a ravishing view of the Gospel scheme of salvation; by another I learned to see the vanity of worldly pleasures, to study the art of self-recollection, to be intent upon mine own im-

provement, and to aim at Christian perfection." And we might have it to add, with the same devout and illustrious writer, I owe it to the providence of God, that ever I was acquainted with such persons.

And here one cannot but lament the false delicacy and corruption of Christians in the present age, which in some respects is sunk into degeneracy, even below the state of the heathen world: Heathens, when they met together, used to discourse concerning the nature of virtue, the chief happiness of man, the being and providence of their supposed gods; they talked of their supreme divinity; with him they began, with him they ended, of him too were their songs. How different from this is the temper and practice of Christians, with respect to the true God, in whom they pretend to believe! I speak not of nominal Christians; of them it is to be feared, that God is not in all their thoughts, for he is not in their mouths, unless when they blaspheme him; I speak of those who make some profession of being Christians: When a company of such convene, how are they employed? Why, those who have ridiculously usurped to themselves the stile of good company, call for the gaming table, and from dissipation or avarice waste the precious hours in a dull round of insipid play.—Hence the unbecoming, the lamentable and growing ignorance of that class of people; an abuse of company! a murdering of time, which I trust will ever be discountenanced by the clergy of Scotland.—And on a cheerful or a grave occasion, where gaming is improper, what do our fashionable people talk about? If one of the company happens to speak of God, or religion, or providence, or a future state, he is almost thought to have fallen into an impropriety of behaviour, and to have transgressed the rules of good-breeding; nay, swayed, it seems, by the fashion of the age, even the teachers of wisdom and righteousness, if they happen to be in company with their hearers or scholars after

the solemn lecture or discourse is delivered, seldom speak a word about what they have been publicly engaged in; just as if they were ashamed to appear wise and good, or suspected that, if they ventured to converse on a grave subject, their lameness might be detected. Not only spiritual subjects are justled out of conversation, but scarce any thing that is manly or sensible is admitted into it; so that unless there be some piece of frivolous news, or if some stroke of wit or pleasantry, or of impertinent banter and ridicule is not fallen upon, the company are drowsy and half asleep; they yawn and stare at one another; they are silent and have nothing to say. Such is commonly our behaviour in company, and such was the behaviour of men in ancient times.

Hence it is that the instructive works concerning religion and morality, which antiquity hath transmitted down to us, and which will be the study, the wonder, and the entertainment of men of erudition, while the world lasts, are written in form of dialogue or conference, and in that form they appear quite easy and natural; because they, in fact, discoursed about such things, and are in those writings represented to the life; but should we attempt to write any thing grave in that form, it would appear altogether unnatural and forced; it would be a contradiction to the present manners; because it is rarely that any serious subject is canvassed in our modern conversations.

One cause of this false delicacy and abuse of company, may perhaps be, that in the last age, and later too perhaps, people talked of spiritual things, who had too little discretion, or had narrow views, or were of a factious and party spirit, or were actuated by low and worldly designs; but because a good thing hath been unhappily abused, shall it afterwards be for ever avoided? Will not those who fear God confer with one another, and by a prudent use of so edifying an exercise, strive to rescue it from disrepute, and bring

it once more in fashion? And if sensible and religious conversation were again counted polite and fashionable, we need not fear but it would be cultivated.

I cannot help thinking, that, if ever a general reformation of the world shall take place, the way of conversing in companies will be much altered from what it is at present. This may be the effect of the world's being reformed, but it may also surprisngly contribute to it as a cause.

It is not necessary or even expedient, that the sincere fearers of God should speak to one another about spiritual things only. Divine objects, if long and stedfastly beheld, must needs impair and weaken the sense of mortals. The conversation may be varied; it may at times be turned to other parts of knowledge which are both pleasing and profitable, and still there may be room enough left for innocent mirth and gaiety.

The above are advantages which all men who have discretion and some degree of knowledge, such as the public instructors of religion, may obtain by free conference amongst themselves: I say among themselves, or such as themselves. When we converse with those called the upper part of the world, it may not be always safe to indulge ourselves in the freedom of conversation; it may be rather proper to be somewhat upon the reserve. The prudent will often keep silence, and keep in his tongue with a bridle; and it would be indelicate to say, how much frequent converse with mean, poor, and uninstructed people, which, by humanity, and religion, and our office, we are obliged to do, flattens the spirit, corrupts the taste, and is apt to hurt the temper.

I might add, that from friendly conference men derive consolation under all the ills of life. Inquisitive and virtuous minds, in any country, are comparatively few, and commonly their condition is not opulent; but while they successfully contribute to im-

prove the mind, enlarge the understanding, and increase the virtue and the faith of one another, they are mutually comforted, and will hardly be sensible of the ills they suffer; as an illustrious band of kinsmen or brothers, they are knit together in love, and bear one another's burdens. And what will alleviate distress, if it is not the sympathy, the counsel, and the assistance of wise and tender hearted friends, mutually given and received? Considering themselves as strangers,—as exiles in a foreign land,—as the citizens of another country, they jointly travel homewards to the city they belong to, they interest themselves in the affairs of one another, and like pilgrims crossing an impetuous river, they pass through life braced, as it were, in the arms of one another. Mutually strengthened, and comforted, and united unto Jesus, they know they shall never perish; they stand unbended under the pressures of life, waiting, and encouraging one another to wait for the “end of their faith, the salvation of their souls.”

I might also have added, 'That there are subjects which are proper to be discussed only in private circles. Religious knowledge hath been distinguished into those points which may at all times, and before all men, be fully and clearly explained; and those, which are to be very warily touched upon. The plain duties and faith of the gospel are the first; knotty points and controversies, which take up so much room in most theological systems, are the last: And what title hath a common audience to hear discourses on controverted points? What purpose can this serve? Why are such things offered in public? Is it that no part of the counsel of God may be suppressed, nor the people defrauded? But you impart to them no real knowledge, you only amuse them with hard words, for they cannot judge of controversy; many of them have no opinion about those points concerning which they raise the greatest clamour; they take

their notions by rebound from others. You do a thing perilous and inconvenient; you confound the distinction which the Apostle makes between milk and strong meat; you counter-act his precept, to avoid questions and contentions, which he says are vain and unprofitable, and do gender strifes; you do the people great harm; you distract their minds, and divert their attention from things that are intelligible, necessary, and useful to them: And if some be so disputatious, so polemically disposed, that one way or other they must dip in controversy, it were surely more proper for them to dispute in private with those who are capable to perceive and weigh the force of metaphysical arguments, and who will either submit to their evidence, or else return answers to them.

I pass over other great advantages to be acquired by unreserved and friendly conversation. It teacheth us to be easy, and to keep temper when we are contradicted,—it leads us into the knowledge of men and manners,—it enables us to speak of human duties with judgment and precision,—it mitigates the ills of life, and heightens its joys;—in some measure, it supplies the place of friendship, a thing so rare, that we may pass through the silent, and the busy scenes of life, without ever meeting with an undisputed instance of it.—The advantages already mentioned,—accuracy in thinking,—progress in the most profitable knowledge,—mutual harmony and good agreement,—growth in the spiritual life,—consolation and inward peace, are momentous and desirable. The desire of them may well incline those who fear God to “speak often one to another;” and if, with a sincere desire to grow in grace and knowledge, we converse with one another; if we strive for improvement, we strive not alone, nor in vain; God himself will assist us by his Spirit. When the two astonished and dejected disciples, going to Emaus, communed together by the way, and reasoned concerning their Master, who three days

before had been torn from them, condemned to death, and crucified; Jesus himself drew near, and went with them; he expounded unto them the scriptures concerning himself, removed their sadness, and warmed their hearts with joy; and they said one to another, "Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked to us by the way, and opened to us the scriptures?" If our endeavours toward spiritual perfection are sincere, will not God's Spirit, in like manner, enlighten and assist us?—Our endeavours to be wise and good, are taken notice of and recorded, for "when they who feared the Lord, spake often one to another, the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written for those who feared the Lord, and thought upon his name." The fearers of God are precious in his sight, they are his special treasure, and sure of immortal glory; "and they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day when I make up my jewels."—Having the knowledge and the comfortable sense of spiritual things, the troubles of life will fall the lighter on their heads, and God may, in his love, save them even from the chastisements which they deserve; "and I will spare them, (saith he) even as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."—But in this life, there is, with respect to prosperity and adversity, and all external things, very little difference to be observed betwixt the state of the righteous and that of the wicked. The great day of retribution approacheth, when God will sever between the sheep and the goats, between the precious and the vile; "Then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not."

May the Spirit of the Lord rest upon us, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord: May he grant us to grow in grace, and that our lips may keep and disperse knowledge, and to his name be immortal praise. Amen.

THE CHARGE.

Dear Sir,

IT is usual to administer some advices to young ministers in your present situation : I am perfectly sure, that in view of entering on that difficult office which you have now accepted of, you have, in the fear of the Lord, by communing with your own heart in solitude, and by speaking often to your best friends, carefully formed a plan of your future conduct in private life, and how you are to discharge the several parts of your ministerial function : and, indeed, it must be confessed, that if you had not done this before-hand, you could but little avail yourself of a few transient directions from this pulpit, though these should be ever so proper, and administered with ever so much warmth of friendship and affection. However, in compliance with the established practice, I shall take the liberty to offer a few things, at present, to your serious consideration.

It is a happy circumstance in your settlement, that you are both presented by the Patron, and have also been the choice of the Congregation. This is the greater a proof of your prudence, and that you acquit yourself well in pulpit, as many of this people have, for a considerable time, been personally acquainted with you, and all of them have had experience of your gift of prayer and talents in preaching. You will retain the esteem of your Congregation by those same means by which you were so happy as to acquire it ; and the Parish will no doubt expect from you an unblameableness in private behaviour, and a diligence in your public performances, which may be suitable to that cheerfulness and harmony, with which they have called you to be their Minister.

The temper, or habit of mind, which you ought uniformly to bear towards the souls of your numer-

ous flock, should consist of pity and good will : it was pity and good will which moved your glorious Master to undertake the work of man's redemption ; you cannot err in forming yourself upon so illustrious an example ; "let the same mind be in you, that was in Christ Jesus." Pity and love to the perishing and precious souls of men, will animate you to the faithful discharge of your sacred and laborious office.

You are to be the speaker in this Congregation ; and most certainly it is a great undertaking for any one, to stand up and charge himself with speaking to a numerous assembly, concerning things of infinite moment, where he alone is to be listened to, and every other person is to remain silent ; for there is hardly one of his audience who is not more quick-sighted to observe the faults than the merits of the speaker ; and these faults, however small or few, are like to eclipse the beauty of the discourse, and to mar the effect of all that is right and forcibly advanced. This, this, however slightly it may be thought of, is a weighty and arduous office : but be not discouraged ; God upholds and strengthens his servants.

You are to lead the devotions of this Congregation : in your prayers you speak to God, in behalf of your people, and along with them.—As our Church hath not received or allowed of set forms, prayer is often deemed to be a subaltern part of the ministerial business, and is therefore apt to be too carelessly studied ; and yet to worship God in a social manner is, or ought to be, the chief end of our assembling in public. Many judicious and devout men have wished that we had public meetings for prayer and praise only : This would be a solemn acknowledgment of our dependence on God ; and it might lead us to be at more pains in studying those prayers which are to be offered up to God in our assemblies.—You will judge it necessary to study carefully, not only the matter, but the manner also, of your public prayers ; you will

seek for acceptable words, that you may always perform this important part of your office with devotion and with decency.

You are to preach stately to this Congregation: In preaching you speak from God to your people; you declare the message which you have received from your Lord and Master; and if you have a sense of God habitually on your mind, and have pity and love to the perishing souls of men, your "doctrine will drop as the rain, your speech will distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass;" possessed of integrity of heart and manners, and showing yourself a pattern of good works, you will enforce the several doctrines of your sacred function, not with the vain pomp of showy eloquence, but with the far more powerful persuasion of active and exemplary virtue: You will soften the severity of precept, with the ease and familiarity of conversation; and by generously mixing with the meanest committed to your care, you will insinuate the instructor under the air of the companion.

With respect to the subjects you are to preach upon, there is one obvious rule which ought to direct you, and every minister of Christ; and it is this: To preach ofteneft on those subjects which are ofteneft mentioned in the Bible, and especially in the New-Testament: These, you know, are the original and everlasting love of God, the grace of Christ to ignorant and miserable men, love to God, faith in Jesus, love to men, self-denial, and a holy conversation, consisting of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, truth, justice, meekness, temperance, and other particular fruits of the Spirit. The views which the scripture gives us of the free love of God, and of the compassion of Christ to a perishing world, are proper to excite in the soul love to God, faith in the Redeemer, wonder, gratitude, and indeed every emotion and expression of faith and love.

If you lay before your people these views of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, how can they want obedience to him, or possibly forget his love?

You will teach them, that the whole duty of man consists in yielding a cheerful obedience to those two great commandments which are the sum of the Moral Law, "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This is the law which Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil; this law he came to magnify and make it honourable: Every fact that is narrated, every doctrine that is revealed in the Gospel, tends to inculcate obedience to this original, everlasting, and immutable law; every plan of teaching, that may tend to weaken the obligations to obey this Moral Law, is unscriptural, and must be wrong and dangerous. "Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law."

By the harmonious Call which you have got, you will have the more confidence to declare to this people all the counsel of God; in particular, to show that saving faith is always accompanied with a holy practice. From the corruption of nature, some people are averse to hear of the necessity of mortification, of repentance, justice, restitution, and a holy life; but "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear," you are, in faithfulness to your trust, wisely to declare to them the absolute necessity of those duties. As you desire that your great Master may be "always with you, to the end," you are to "teach them to observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded." Receive this advice in the inspired words of the apostle Paul, "our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works: These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority and doctrine. This is a faithful saying, and these things I will, that thou affirm constantly,

that they who have believed in God, might be careful to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable unto men. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained."

Another part of your work is to visit the families in your Parish, and to visit the sick: The first is often more laborious than useful; the last is an office of humanity, of Christian compassion, and part of a minister's duty; and you will be happy in pouring the balm of consolation into the soul of the dying Christian, and in rivetting good impressions on the hearts of those who shall recover. But when you visit the sick, who are also poor, (and, no doubt, you will find many such in your wide and populous Parish,) your breast will heave with all the feelings of compassion; when you go into the dismal cottages of the starving and dying poor, the sight of human woe, the gloomy image of hunger, of agony, of death, will strike all your senses; with a glowing pity, you will have room in your breast to take in a concern for your fellow-Christians in distress; and you will regret that it is not in your power to relieve them as you would: but when you find that they have lived by faith, you will, by encouraging them to look unto Jesus, who hath taken away the sting of death, cause them to rejoice and be glad, that they are soon to find the grave: nay, your very sympathising with them, will comfort them in some degree; and from the claimant view of indigence and misery, your spirit will be stirred up to "charge them that are rich in this world, that they be ready to distribute and willing to communicate" to the necessities of the poor, in this time of general distress.

I say nothing about your conduct in Church judicatories: in this age, these Courts are less and less

regarded : but when any of your ordinary people unhappily fall into those transgressions which are judged to merit the censures of the Church, you may perhaps find it prudent and tending to edification, to discuss as many of such scandals as possible, quietly in your own Session.—With respect to your appearances in higher judicatories, I have no reason to doubt but you will always follow that which is right, or appeareth to you as such.

I conclude what I had to say to you, in the words of Paul to Timothy, proper to guide you in your private and public capacity. “I charge thee, therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearance and his kingdom ; preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee. Meditate on these things ; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Watch then in all things, do the work of an Evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. Take heed unto thyself, and to thy doctrine, continue in them, for in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” And when you are on the verge of life, you will have to say, with that faithful servant of Christ, “The time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will

give me at that day.—Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.”

The form requires, that I should also speak a few words to you of this Congregation.—You have harmoniously called Mr. Burns to be your Minister: You have promised him all encouragement, and submission in the Lord; you have done well; continue in this laudable spirit, continue to “receive him in the Lord, with all gladness, and hold him in reputation, because he labours in the work of Christ. Esteem him very highly in love for his works sake.” Nothing will so effectually encourage him, as the seeing you give evidence of your growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ; when he observes you living soberly, righteously, and godly, and having, in all things, your conversation, such as becometh the Gospel, this will encourage his heart; you will be his “glory and his joy; for what is his hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?”

And you will give evidence of your growth in grace, by the practice of sobriety, temperance, justice, and charity; and, in short, by the performance of relative duties. Let parents and children, masters and servants, rich and poor, conscientiously discharge the duties respectfully incumbent upon them. In particular, the rich are called upon, in this hard time, to open their hands wide to relieve the poor, who are every where greatly multiplied in number, and many, by not being employed, are in deep distress. No sight will please you so much, as the faces of men who have been made less miserable, and more happy, by your charity. To relieve them, is an evidence that you love God, and esteem the grace of the Lord Jesus; “but who so hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

And you will be guided to this Christian conversation, if you live by faith, if you are devout, if you read and hear the word of God, and sanctify the Sabbath: Duties which (alas!) are too much neglected in this dissipated age.

To be edified by public prayers, it is necessary that you join and enter into the spirit of those prayers; that is, that the aspirations of your souls should go along with the words spoken by your Minister; whether in confession, in petition, or in thanksgiving and praise, your whole souls should be engaged in the duty, as in the presence of God, who searcheth the heart. What I now say is too little attended to, too seldom mentioned, and too little practised in most of our congregations; and yet without it, people pray not in public at all; their bodies are present, but their hearts join not in the service.

But a great part of your time in Church is employed in hearing: Your Minister is to explain the scriptures, to convey instruction into your minds, to persuade you to a holy practice, praying you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God. Come to hear the word of God with a humble mind, sensible that you stand in need of spiritual instruction, desirous not only to learn your duty, but resolving also, by God's grace, to put it in practice. The discourses you hear from the pulpit may not all be equally agreeable to you; but it is very possible that those you dislike most may be very necessary, and if duly improved by you, tend most to your real edification, by prevailing upon you, "to deny yourselves, to take up your cross, and to follow Jesus." In the Gospel there "are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises;" but they are given, "that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lusts." Many of you are prone enough to lay claim to the promises and privileges of the Gospel; but some of you are

unwilling even to hear of the duties it requires. When Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and bid that inspired teacher go his way; some of our people, when they hear of the necessity of mortification, of justice, truth, meekness, love, and charity, they go away from their teachers: And there may be places where, if a pastor should venture to skim over these duties, or touch at them only by the bye, he might render himself wonderfully popular, and draw town and country after him. But your Minister dareth not to do so, because he knows, that if he should thus “seek to please men, he should not be the servant of Christ.” He will preach faith, but he will insist particularly on practice; in preaching Christ, he will “warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” He will “please you for your good to edification;” and if you aim at eternal life, why should any gospel truth displease or disgust you? Will you act like a foolish man attacked with a desperate disease, who grasps at the sweet potion, but rejects the bitter remedy, which, the physician tells him, is absolutely necessary to save his life? These discourses which pierce you to the heart; which show you your corruption, your faults, and your follies; which alarm your consciences, and set you all a-stir; which, through divine grace, are the means of humbling you, and causing you apply to God for the renovation of your nature by the Holy Ghost; these, these are the discourses which, however unwelcome they may be, are likely to awaken you out of that security which leads on to everlasting destruction.—And when you come in a devout temper prepared to hear the word of God; when you listen to it with reverence and attention; when you lay it up in your hearts, and go home from Church in silence, in a sober and thoughtful frame; your spiritual improvement is then begun, and God will by

his Spirit carry it onwards to perfection, for you may be "confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Finally, my brethren, that you may derive advantage from the public ministrations of your Pastor, exercise yourselves habitually in prayer; family prayer and secret prayer: By prayer, "our gospel will come unto you, not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost:" Through this Spirit, the word of God will penetrate your souls: It will not be a "dead letter, but quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword." By the Spirit to be obtained by your praying to God in the name of Christ, you will be disposed to receive the Gospel, "not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them who believe." The discourses you hear from the pulpit, are like seeds sown in your hearts; and as seeds scattered on the ground do not grow up to maturity but as they are cherished by the benign warmth of the sun; so it is the enlivening operation of the Spirit which gives efficacy to the word preached.—If you strive and pray for spiritual improvement, and "follow on to know the Lord," the Spirit of God will come unto you "as the rain, as the former and the latter rain" upon the perched ground. But whilst you pray for your own advancement in grace and knowledge, neglect not to pray for your Minister also; "I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with him, in your prayers to God for him. He watcheth for your souls; pray for him as for one who must give account, that he may do it with joy, and not with grief. Pray for him in the Spirit, watching thereunto, with all perseverance, that utterance may be given him, that he may open his mouth boldly, that he may speak as he ought to speak, to make known to you the mystery

of the Gospel." Thus united to your Pastor in Christian love, striving and persevering in the same great design, you and he will pass through the wilderness of life, mutually comforting one another; and being by the grace of God kept from falling, you will at length be "presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end, for grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." And without this hope, what is there in the world that can comfort us? Without it, every prospect is dreary, dark, and gloomy; without it, our being is vain, and life is but a dream: But blessed be God, "life and immortality are brought to light in the Gospel; there remaineth a rest for the people of God; Christ hath purchased for us a kingdom, a kingdom that cannot be moved; for God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him."

Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

SERMON III.

THE REVOLT OF THE TEN TRIBES.

Preached in the Church of Govan, on the Public Fast, 1776.

So when all Israel saw that the King hearkened not unto them, the people answered the King, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel! Now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

I KINGS, xii. 16.

TO know the history of mankind, should be the study of every person: To know the changes that have happened in the circumstances of individuals, and of great societies, and the causes of those changes, may be of great utility to every man, whether he be in a public or in a private station. Not to speak of the pleasure derived from a survey of past transactions and revolutions; there are to be found, in the history of almost any country, some noble examples of integrity and virtue, which we ought to admire and imitate; and also many striking instances of folly, injustice, and cruelty, which we ought to abhor: Such instances and examples furnish us with lessons to form our temper, and to direct our conduct in life. But there is no history so fruitful of instruction as that contained in the holy scripture. The holy scripture is, in a peculiar sense, the history of providence, the history of God's moral government: "God's countenance beholdeth the upright, and his face is set against the wicked." By his disposal, the wise and prudent "inherit worldly glory, and shame is the promotion of fools." The righteous are oftentimes

prosperous, and, to a considerable degree, they meet with the reward of virtue even in the present life; the devices of the wicked are disappointed, their cruel projects are retarded, or altogether blasted, and their hands cannot perform their enterprize; so that they also, even in this life, commonly meet with some part of that punishment which bad men deserve.

I confess that I feel much pleasure in the historical passages of scripture; some of these I have not long ago read, and endeavoured to explain to you; and I have often wondered, that even those who have too low an esteem of divine revelation do not peruse the scripture-history attentively, because I am sure that those of them who have capacity might derive great instruction and improvement from that perusal.

In the chapter I have now read, we have the account of a sudden and memorable revolution that happened in the kingdom of Judah, the revolt of the ten tribes, which, alas! gave rise to bloody wars between the two kingdoms; weakened each of them, and was unfavourable to the true religion. It is the design of this discourse, to consider the history before me, and to offer some remarks, all or most of which have, I presume, occurred already to every attentive reader.

“Solomon slept with his fathers, and Rehoboam, his son, reigned in his stead.” It is not expressly said, but it is evidently implied, that when Solomon died, Rehoboam was immediately crowned at Jerusalem, and set apart to be king of Judah and Benjamin, by being anointed with oil, as was the custom among the Jews. David was anointed at Hebron to be king of Judah seven years before he was made king of the ten tribes: But after Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, was basely murdered in his own palace, the Israelites waited on David at Hebron; and, when he had made a league or compact with them, respecting their privileges and the taxes they were to pay, he was anointed to be king of the ten tribes also. Seventy-

three years had elapsed since this union of the two crowns; and yet it seems the ten tribes were still considered as being in some sort a distinct kingdom from that of Judah. "And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king." Rehoboam went to Shechem: all Israel, that is, the heads of the tribes, delegates from all Israel, were there before him; they had met in Congress at Shechem to make him king, not with power unlimited: From their regard to the family of David, they desired to make him king; they had come to Shechem in that view; but it was upon the conditions which they expressly mention: for, as was natural, the regard they had to their own interest was stronger than their attachment to David's family.

Shechem: At this ancient town many public meetings were held. It was in the tribe of Ephraim, and stood on the brow of a hill, at the side of that beautiful valley which lay between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizzim, from which two mountains, the blessings and curses, mentioned in Deuteronomy, were pronounced. It was in the parcel of land which Jacob a little before his death gave to his son Joseph. Here Joseph's bones were buried; here was Jacob's well, near which our Saviour had the conversation with the woman of Samaria, mentioned in John's gospel. Shechem was at first built by Hamor, and so called after the name of his son. The mention of this place is introduced in scripture with a very tragical story: Dinah, Jacob's daughter, had gone out to see the daughters of the land; that is, as if some unwary young woman should go to some distant fair or market, where she is a stranger; or, as one in fashionable life goes unguarded to waste her time at a play, or a nocturnal card-assembly, or a masquerade: She was fair; she was in danger; Shechem saw her, and dishonoured her; but, being sick, and desperately in love with her, he would have given all he had in the world

to have her to wife. Old Hamor, his father, pitied his distress, and, dreading no guile, entered into a treaty with Jacob's family about the marriage. They perfidiously consented to the match, on condition that Hamor, Shechem, the citizens, all their domestics, and slaves, should be circumcised. To these terms Hamor agreed, and Shechem also, who "was more honourable than all his father's house." Trusting to the sincerity of Jacob's family, they were all circumcised, and so deprived themselves of all means of making any defence, should they be attacked; and attacked most certainly they were; for, upon the third day, when they were sore, two of Jacob's sons rushed in upon them, sword in hand, and barbarously butchered all the males, man and child; just as if in a field of battle, when the weaker side fling down their arms, and surrender to the stronger, the stronger should instantly fall on, and with unrelenting cruelty massacre the unarmed soldiers upon the spot. Such things, alas! have been done.

The heads of the ten tribes, who had come to Shechem, fearing or suspecting that Rehoboam and his counsellors would not grant them the terms they were to demand, had laid their measures with a considerable degree of political ability: They brought one with them, whom, in case of necessity, they intended to make king, and to erect themselves into a separate independent kingdom, as they had been already, under the government of Saul's son. This was their intention, in case Rehoboam should refuse their petition. The man they took care to bring along with them was Jeroboam.

Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had lost his father when he was very young; and, though he had none to take care of his education but his widowed mother, he soon emerged into greatness. By his spirit and activity he caused himself to be taken notice of: He is called the servant of Solomon, just as ministers of

state are now called the king's servants; but in point of rank and honour, he was at least on a footing with those great officers mentioned above, two of whom were married to Solomon's two daughters. He was a mighty man of valour, ambitious, and a subtle politician. He had already, it seems, displayed his great capacity for business; the people had formed a high esteem of him; and "Solomon seeing the young man, that he had industry, made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph." He had a difficult part to act; to please the king, by exacting the heavy taxes; and to acquire and preserve the good-will of the people: in both which, however, by his address, he succeeded, at least for a time. But in the courts of absolute princes no man is in so great danger as one in whose character ability and popularity are united. Neither the prince nor the ministers are at ease, whilst such a man is near them, in office, or is suffered to live. It was this that caused the murder of the renowned and incomparable Germanicus, in the reign of the vile Tiberius, his uncle, who ordered him to be poisoned. This was the cause of Corbulo's death, in the reign of Nero; and of the wise and virtuous Agricola's, in the reign of Domitian; Agricola, who, by erecting Roman schools, began first to civilise this savage country. Nay, in modern times, if a minister is popular, and possessed of uncommon talents and integrity; if he ventures to take the guidance of public affairs, when, by a wretched management, the state is miserable at home, and contemptible abroad; if he conducts a dangerous war successfully; if he raises the renown of his country higher, and spreads it wider than ever it was before; if he attempts to lessen pensions, and to abridge the number of pensioners; if he applies to the exigencies of the state these immense sums which were formerly given in shameful bribes—all the corrupted courtiers, and their vile flatterers, are his enemies. Not satis-

fied with displacing him, they are busy to blast his character with their venomous breath: The cry against him comes from above; all the subaltern tools of corruption join in the cry; and though he be as virtuous as Cato, they will strive, in vain, to render his name as odious as that of Nero: And if a statesman, of the most distinguished merit, above corruption, and not chargeable with any of those vices which in the issue appeared in Jeroboam, hath in our times been treated in so shocking a manner, need we wonder that the Jewish courtiers should solicit Solomon to put Jeroboam to death? It is said, that "Jeroboam lift up his hand against the king." I do not recollect that he made any open insurrection; the meaning probably is, that he artfully endeavoured to steal away the hearts of the men of Israel, behaving like Absalom, who, "when any man came near him, to do him obeisance, put forth his hand, and took him, and saluted him." And as in Solomon's declining years a weakness had crept into his government, that king knew well that Jeroboam had sagacity to observe such weakness, and that he had also both ambition and popularity to avail himself of it, if a proper opportunity should offer.

But I must not forget, that, besides Jeroboam's talents and popularity, there was another thing that made him to be suspected by Solomon: Jeroboam being to wait on the Court, had clad himself in a new or birth-day suit; for a great man is forced to regard so frivolous a thing as external decoration: As he was returning from court, Ahijah, the prophet, met him in the fields, and they two were alone: "Ahijah caught hold of the new garment, and rent it in twelve pieces, and said to Jeroboam, take thee ten picces; for thus saith the Lord the God of Israel, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee." This prediction, it seems, had come to Solomon's ears, (probably it had been pub-

lished by Jeroboam himself;) and therefore, as well as for the other cause I mentioned, Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam, and Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt; for even in the decline of Solomon's affairs, he dared not to remain in Judah. He escaped into Egypt; but as soon as he heard of Solomon's death, he was it seems in no fear of Rehoboam, or he thought of Ahijah's prophecy, and resolved to return; and, at the same time, he was by the ten tribes invited and entreated to return home. He is, we see, along with the heads of the tribes when they present their petition to Rehoboam; for Jeroboam, and all the congregation of Israel came, and spoke unto Rehoboam, saying, "Thy father made our yoke grievous; now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." This is the complaint of the Israelites, their petition of right, the condition on which they were to make Rehoboam their king. You will here remark, that the complaint is only against Solomon. David had made a league with the ten tribes; and it seems he kept to his oath, and did not violate their rights. It was Solomon that did so. You will also remark, that there are two particular grievances complained of; the "grievous service," and "the heavy yoke." Solomon was most part of his reign occupied in great buildings; the service, the personal labour at these works was exceedingly grievous. "King Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel, and the levy was thirty thousand men. He had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains, besides the chief officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred which ruled over the people that wrought in the work." This levy was the grievous service of men. The heavy yoke was the levy of taxes, and it was not less grievous. "And this is the reason of the levy which King Solomon raised for to

build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo," and many more; among others "Tadmor in the wilderness," near the banks of the Euphrates, afterwards called Palmyra, the noble ruins of which are still to be seen. David, indeed, had laid up much gold for building the temple; and from Eloth and Ezienzeber, ports upon the Red Sea, which David had violently taken from the Edomites, Solomon carried on a great trade, and imported much gold from Tarshish and from Ophir: But, to carry on and complete such immense works, he found it necessary to break the league his father had confirmed by oath, and to augment the taxes on his own subjects. It is computed, that, from a territory scarce larger, I believe, than the half of Ireland, he levied yearly near five millions Sterling, though possibly some part of this sum was extorted from the conquered provinces. The cattle, which, by his twelve officers, he exacted from the people, to maintain his table, was also a burden and a grievance. "And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pasture, and an hundred sheep, besides harts, and roe-bucks, and fallow-deer, and fatted fowl."

The claim or petition is, "Make the heavy yoke which thy father put upon us lighter, and we will serve thee." It is modestly expressed; they leave it to the king how far he was to make their yoke lighter. I suppose they meant to say, depart from these new exactions and prestations; restore our original rights; let us be taxed agreeably to the compact, the league we made with David, agreeably to the ancient charter we have from that king, "and we will serve thee."

Though it doth not appear that the representatives of the ten tribes had the king's authority to meet in

Congress at Shechem, their petition or remonstrance, however, was graciously received by Rehoboam.—There have been, in latter times, petitions against new and heavy taxations, humbly offered by great and respectable bodies of men; which petitions have not only been rejected, but new and severer measures have been enacted against the petitioners and their constituents. Rehoboam heard and received the remonstrance. Hitherto, indeed, I see in him no symptoms of any arbitrary temper; and had he fallen into the hands of wise and reasonable counsellors, he might have reigned over all Israel and Judah, in the same splendour his father had done. “He said unto them,” that is, to the delegates, “Depart yet for three days, and then come again to me; and the people departed.” Hitherto all is transacted with becoming decency, and promised a good issue. The Israelites, from the liking they had to the family of David, were willing to serve Rehoboam on the condition they had mentioned in their petition; and to take three days to deliberate what would be the proper answer to a petition of such importance was prudent in the king. Three days accordingly were spent in that deliberation.

Though it appears that Rehoboam had dismissed his father’s privy council, he had, however, brought them along with him to Shechem. And he thought proper first to ask their opinion and advice; old age claims respect, and grey hairs challenge reverence. “King Rehoboam consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon, his father, while he yet lived, and said, what do ye advise that I may answer this people?” Here is a mind candid, to all appearance, and open to receive good advice. “And they (the old men) spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant to the people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.”—“If thou wilt;”

This, I think, implies, that the old counsellors knew or feared, that the king's answer was formed already, by his having listened in private to those young men who were grown up with him. It may, however, seem, that when they said "this day," they advised the king to make large promises, and to give fair words on that critical day; and that, if he once got the people to submit to his rule, should they afterward prove refractory, he might treat them as rebels, and compel them by force to be his servants for ever. I cannot think this to be the meaning; the meaning certainly is, if thou wilt this day gratify the people; if thou wilt use lenient expressions; if thou wilt act agreeably to all that is equitable and right in their petition; and if thou wilt continue to do so, then they will be thy subjects for ever. A prudent advice in such circumstances, if ever there was one; and in this advice the old privy counsellors seem to have been unanimous; and had the new ministry given the like advice, the ten provinces, in all human probability, would have continued in subjection to the house of David; the united kingdom would have been better able to withstand the attacks of foreign powers; and all the bloody wars which were afterwards carried on between the two kingdoms would have been prevented. But, alas! "Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men." This is the first appearance of any thing blameable in Rehoboam; he forsook the counsel; he was not satisfied with it; he did not acquiesce in it; he departed from it, and rejected it, because it did not gratify his love of domination. And having got a new privy council, it was but decent that he should consult with them: "He consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him." It commonly happens, that when a new king succeeds to a throne, there is, as it were, an universal agreement to flatter and to magnify him: His knowledge, his

wisdom, his eloquence, his virtue, are extolled above all measure; every one about court strives to exceed another in this species of adulation; and every one expects, for his pains, a place or a pension under the new government. These flatterers are the most dangerous enemies of princes. Thus James I. was, on his accession to the throne of England, so extravagantly flattered, that, though at first he perceived his danger from the sweetness of a potion so copiously administered to him, and had the sense to declare, "that these flatterers would spoil even a good king," yet his sense was more and more damaged by constantly receiving and swallowing a draught so delightful and so stupifying; so that he wondered at his own ability, or king-craft, as he called it, and vainly boasted that he had managed the affairs of England in the last years of Queen Elizabeth; though it is well known, that for many years he and his ministers in Scotland were, like children in leading-strings, guided in every material step by that immortal princess. Thus, when James II. came to the throne, his dignity and high spirit were loudly praised. The flattering courtiers boasted, that he would not, like Charles, debase himself to be a pensioner of France, though the French king, they say, declared that James was as willing to receive his money as his brother Charles had been. And thus also, when Anne succeeded the illustrious William III. she was flattered by a parliamentary address, that, by her capacity, she would retrieve the honour of the nation. And I make no doubt, but the Jewish counsellors talked in the same style with respect to Rehoboam: They flattered him, and taught him to think himself, in every respect, far superior to Solomon, his father. They are called young men; Rehoboam himself was not young; "he was forty and one years old when he began to reign." The counsellors, who had been at school with him, were not very young in point of age; but they were

raw, unskilful, unpractised in state-affairs; and, as it would seem, they were, like many others, abundantly young in point of political knowledge. It is remarkable, that the king speaks to those young counsellors in a style very different from that in which he spoke to the old: To the old counsellors, who had stood before his father, he said, "How do ye advise that I may answer this people?" But unto the young ones, who stood before himself, he said, "What counsel give ye, that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?" I confess, I am more and more tempted to suspect, that the king consulted the old privy counsellors only to save appearances. He was determined, it would seem, to give just such an answer as those who stood before him should advise; and it is very probable, he knew before-hand what that advice was to be: "WHAT WE may answer this people;" a compliment from the king to these raw statesmen; or it means, that the answer to be given was to be a deed of the privy council, which, in arbitrary kingdoms, is you know of equal authority with an act of parliament in limited governments;—and in these last it hath sometimes been so also. To a prince fond of despotic power, and elated with the belief that he was an incomparably greater personage than his predecessor, nothing could be more flattering than the advice which these young counsellors gave Rehoboam. "And the young men that were grown up with him, spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now, whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." Nothing could be more foolish, more

tyrannical, more exasperating, than the answer which these young counsellors advised to be given to the petition of the delegates. Let me make a few remarks upon it. And, 1st, There is no apology made for the heavy yoke which Solomon had laid upon the people. Something might have been said about his expensive buildings. To build the temple was his duty; God had appointed him to build it; he had got a solemn charge from his dying father to ornament that house with wonderful decorations; "for the palace was not for man, but for the Lord God." And he ought not to be blamed for building a palace to himself; but it must be confessed, that to waste much time, and labour, and money, upon grand and unnecessary buildings, can afford a prince but a flimsy excuse for oppressing his subjects. The walls of Babylon, the hanging-gardens there, the temple of Belus, the pyramids of Egypt, are looked upon as striking monuments of the grandeur of ancient times; but they are the monuments of a vain and useless grandeur. And in whatever country such works were erected, it is a sufficient proof that the common people there were held in a pitiable and abject bondage; dragged from their families, and from rural, innocent, useful occupations, and forced to drudge and sweat at ostentatious buildings, to gratify the pride and caprice of a despotic master.

2d, The answer was foolish and unreasonable, because, instead of advising the king to make the yoke lighter, they advised him to make it heavier. There was certainly no need of adding to the yoke, or even of continuing the high taxes levied by Solomon. The buildings were finished, and the kingdom had peace. "I will add to your yoke:" He was not even to tell them how much he was to add. Had there been a line drawn beyond which he was not to pass, a limited proportion of their services and effects, which, if performed and paid, he was not to exact more; the

answer would have been more discreet, and the condition of the people somewhat more tolerable; but there was no such limitation; so that the poor Israelites had reason to dread that all that they had was to be violently torn from them, to satisfy the rapaciousness of those young counsellors who unhappily had got Rehoboam under their guidance. In fact, they were to have nothing left which they could call their own. And, as appears from the next expression,

3d, More was to be exacted from them than ever they could expect to have. "My father made your yoke heavy; but my little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins." The services exacted, the taxes levied by my father, were, you say, a grievous burden; but the services and taxes which I am to exact will be as much greater than those exacted by my father, as a man's body is thicker than his little finger; a proverbial expression, perhaps; but no words could more clearly discover the cruel and arbitrary temper of the counsellors who stood before this ill advised king. And I remark,

4th, That they advise the king to tell the delegates, without disguise, how the services and the payment of the taxes were to be enforced, namely, by corporal punishment: "My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." According to the savage practice in despotic kingdoms, Solomon used, it seems, to enforce obedience to his arbitrary will, by chastising his subjects with whips or scourges; but Rehoboam was advised to do this with ten times more severity; he was to chastise them with scorpions, that is, with whips or scourges that had iron rowels affixed to them, which would tear the flesh from the very bone. This is the answer which Rehoboam's privy council advised him to make; the answer which, excepting one article, he actually made to the heads of the ten tribes: for "Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had

appointed, saying, Come to me on the third day. And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old mens counsel that they gave him, and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." The edict itself was rigid and tyrannical; and it was announced to the people with roughness, with a stern and haughty countenance, and evident marks that the king held them in contempt. You are to observe, that there is one article of the advice given which was not delivered by the king to the delegates; "My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins." Did this proceed from the king's lenity? I wish I could think so; "but the king spake roughly." Perhaps the king had forgotten a few of the words which his counsellors had dictated to him; for I believe it was not yet the custom for ministers to write the speech which the king was to deliver; the king was left to recollect the several words of their advice as his memory should serve him.

The effect this tyrannical declaration produced was the same that every such declaration ought to produce, and will produce on free minds. Such an undisguised determination to exercise unlimited and despotic power would inspire even cowards with manhood and resolution; for, will free men tamely submit to be slaves, and, if possible, worse than slaves, whilst they have it in their power to preserve their liberty, and to do themselves justice? The new counsellors might flatter Rehoboam, that there were awful rays of glory darting from his august countenance; that the people would be intimidated at his presence; that they would receive his royal orders with a humble submission, and yield obedience in the best manner they could; but both they and the king were altogether disappointed; Though their remonstrance

was received and heard, yet, after so determined and so rough an answer, they have not patience to remonstrate again. Nothing is so contemptible as threats; even by a prince, when it is well known that such threats cannot be put in execution. Without being abashed, they, in the king's very face, avow and announce their revolt. And I cannot help thinking, that in the king's presence they express their indignation with some degree of insolence; for, "when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: To your tents, O Israel! now see to thine house, David. So Israel departed to their tents." What portion have we in David? we are not of that tribe: What inheritance have we in the son of Jesse? it is none of our concern to become slaves, to support the haughty pride of a king sprung from so poor a family as that of Jesse; for they spake so by way of contempt. There is even a sort of challenge given, a defiance of Rehoboam; see to thine house, David; we are able to defend ourselves; we defy thy power. To your tents, O Israel! so Israel departed to their tents.

Rehoboam was the third king of that race. The original family of Jewish kings was that of Saul, after whose death, his son, Ishbosheth, as I have said, reigned seven years: It is, however, remarkable, that the Israelites seek not for a king in that family. Perhaps there was none of the family alive who was fit to be made king: David had delivered seven brave men, sons of Saul, to the Gibeonites, to be hanged at Gibeah of Saul, to turn away the anger of the Lord in a time of famine. And Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, if alive, was lame. But in those days, it was not a regard to family, but esteem of military accomplishments, which made people choose one to be their king. Thus the Israelites said to David at Hebron,

“In time past, even when Saul was king, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the Lord thy God said unto thee, thou shalt feed my people, thou shalt be ruler over my people Israel.” And the same Israelites had it in view to make Jeroboam their king, because he was a mighty man of valour.

The young men grown up with Rehoboam, having got him under their direction, pushed him on to another very rash and fatal step. “Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute, and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died; therefore King Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.” This Adoram had been over the levy in Solomon’s time: He was kept in place, though the old counsellors had been dismissed. In his office, though he had pleased the king, he had, it seems, rendered himself obnoxious to the people. He was sent to levy the tribute as usual; whether the heavy yoke only that was paid to Solomon, or with additions, as the king had said, doth not appear. But at sight of him all Israel are inflamed against him. The heads of the tribes, who had been exasperated by the king’s answer, probably conducted the licentious spirit. The people, all in a ferment, rise with an unbridled fury; with a savage and unrelenting rage, the incensed mob, disgusted at Adoram before, and incensed by hearing of the answer which the king had just given to the remonstrance, they stoned Adoram with stones, that he died. A mob is altogether unjustifiable; but rulers ought to avoid such unjustifiable steps as are provoking and violent, and may drive the exasperated people to extremities.

What must these young counsellors have now thought of their desperate counsels, by which the king was disgraced and terrified, and seemed to be in danger of his life. Nor was his fear without ground;

for, when a mob is once a-foot, what or who is it that can put a stop to its fury? Even majesty itself, if in the way, may fall a victim to its senseless rage. Must not the king himself have been somewhat sorry that he forsook the prudent counsel of the old men, when he sees himself forced to flee in terror from those, who, if he had spoken and acted with propriety, would have trembled before him, and yielded a ready obedience to his just commands? He made speed to get him up to his chariot, and drove as quickly as he could to Jerusalem.

When Rehoboam had, by flight, escaped to the capital; after his authority had been controuled, his will resisted, and the collector of his taxes massacred by a mob; he, without repealing the obnoxious edict, or taking time to think of some lenient steps, being yet directed by his young counsellors, had immediate recourse to coercive measures. He immediately levied a powerful army to force the revolted provinces to submit again to his grievous yoke, and to pay the heavy taxes imposed upon them. "And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon." Had he first made their burden lighter, and repealed the edict for an unlimited tribute, which he had so recently enacted, I do not know but the rage of the people would have soon subsided, and, from their liking to David's family, they might have returned again, and submitted to Rehoboam: but there was no such repeal, no relaxation; he assembled a hundred and fourscore thousand. I suspect that the men of Judah and Benjamin had no great mind to this war against their brethren; for, a few years after this period, Abijam levied and led on to battle no fewer than four hundred thousand. Be this as it may, Re-

hoboam thought this a sufficient army; for he did not, as was often the custom, hire the Syrians, or other foreign troops, to crush the spirit of the revolted provinces. But when this army of a hundred and eighty thousand are mustered, and upon their march, their march is countermanded by an authority infinitely superior to that of Rehoboam; for "the word of God came unto Shemaiah, the man of God, saying, Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house." It is said in scripture, that sometimes God makes the judges or leaders of a nation fools; but when the leaders of a nation have gone into foolish or ruinous measures, it seldom happens that the infatuation is universal. There may be still a few uncorrupted persons who have love to their country, to its laws, its liberty, and its peace; who have sense to see the unrighteous and destructive schemes that are going to be pursued, and who have also spirit and resolution to cry out against them; though, alas! when folly, corruption, and venality, have become general, these friends of wisdom, and justice, and peace, oftentimes cry in vain: But when a Shemaiah, the man of God, known to be a prophet, when he raises his voice, when he speaks in the name of God, it is certainly becoming, that an immediate stop be put to unjust and pernicious measures, however keenly these were pursued before. It appears, however, that it was not Rehoboam; and still less can we imagine that it was the young men grown up with him, who listened to Shemaiah, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not go up to fight against thy brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house." It was the house of Judah and Benjamin, and the remnant of the people, that is, some few of the ten

tribes who had not joined in the revolt; these were they who listened to the man of God. *They*, it is expressly said, not *HE*, but *they*, hearkened to the word of the Lord, and "returned to depart according to the word of the Lord." Indeed, it is not likely that Rehoboam, "who did evil, and forsook the law of the Lord," would be much influenced by the authority of a prophet. When Micajah modestly, but in a picturesque and affecting manner, dissuaded Ahab from going to fight against the Syrians at Ramoth-Gilead; Ahab, however, proceeded; and, which is more, even the good Jehoshaphat, notwithstanding all that Micajah had said, went to fight along with that idolatrous king: But the people, Judah and Benjamin, hearkened. It is not said that Rehoboam gave them leave to disband: They had, as I observed before, no great heart to the war; so they returned every man to his house. It is very possible they thought that if they should, by force, enslave the ten tribes, the ten tribes, in return, might soon be made the willing instruments to enslave them. One thing which must have had great weight with the army, was the word of the prophet speaking to them in the name of God: "Return, for this thing is from me." We are told above, that "the king hearkened not to the people," (that is, to the petition of the delegates at Shechem); "for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat." Here we are swallowed up and lost in wonder; we are led to think of these secret things which belong to the Lord; we are led up to the original cause of every revolution in states and kingdoms. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! for who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" Rehoboam's foolish answer was the occa-

sion or immediate cause, but it was only the second cause, of the revolt. The operation of all causes is guided and directed by the incomprehensible wisdom of the "Governor of the nations, who ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The Most High divideth to the nations their inheritance. God changeth the times and the seasons. He removeth kings, and setteth up kings. He leadeth counsellors, he leadeth princes away spoiled; overthrows the mighty, and makes the judges of the earth as vanity. Promotion cometh not from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, but God is judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another. Wisdom and might are his; he turneth wise men backward, and makes their knowledge foolish: but his counsel shall stand; he will do all his pleasure." God often makes use of the folly and wickedness of men to bring about the ends of his adorable providence. Nay, the attempts of men to defeat or retard the appointments of divine providence, tend often to the more speedy execution of them. Rehoboam knew that formerly the ten tribes were an independent kingdom; he knew that Sheba had endeavoured that they should revolt from David; and, having heard of the prophecy of Ahijah, he expected, it is probable, that, by loading these ten tribes with heavy taxes, he would depress their spirits, and retain them to be his subjects for ever; but this attempt of his was the cause or occasion of an immediate revolt. The means used to depress or impoverish a country or province, are oftentimes the means of its riches and aggrandisement.

Whilst the ten tribes thus revolted, Judah, in a large sense, that is, Judah and Benjamin, continued in their allegiance. Probably these two tribes were treated with some indulgence. Rehoboam was of the tribe of Judah; and Jerusalem, where the king's palace was, stood within the territory of the tribe of

Benjamin. The king, it is likely, intended to exercise his rigour chiefly against the ten tribes, for the reason I have just hinted at.

In the mean time Jeroboam was crowned. "And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him into the congregation, and made him king over all Israel." All the heads of the tribes knew he was come again; for he had been with them at Shechem, and he was no doubt glad that the king gave so foolish an answer. And when all the people also knew that he was come again, they sent for him, and called him, and elected him to be their king in a full congregation.

But it soon appeared how ill Jeroboam deserved that elevation to which God in his providence had raised him. Entirely swayed by worldly motives, he disregarded the exhortations and the promise of God which Ahijah had delivered to him. He made religion give way to reasons of state. He said in his heart, "Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David; if the people shall go up to do sacrifice in the house of God at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their Lord, even unto Rehoboam, king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam, king of Judah." To hinder the people from going three times a-year to worship in the temple of Jerusalem, as they were strictly commanded by the law of God, he established idolatry in Israel; like Rehoboam, he got counsellors who advised him to this impious step. He took counsel, and set up two calves of gold, one in Dan, and one in Bethel; and pretending all this was for the ease of the people, he said, "It is too much to go up to Jerusalem; behold thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt: and this thing became a sin." It was thus that Jeroboam made Israel to sin; and it is thus that, for causes political, selfish, sometimes cruel, rulers sacrifice the pure worship of

God, and establish idolatry and image-worship in its place. Not that every change in a state is hurtful to religion or to civil liberty; the reformation in Germany was favourable to both; so was the reformation in England and in Scotland; and so also, in the days of our forefathers, was the Revolution.

But it was a bold step that was taken by Jeroboam; and, if a great part of the Israelites had not already embraced idolatry, it might have cost him dear; it might have cost him his crown; as a like daring step did to an ill-advised and unfortunate sovereign of Great Britain: For the step Jeroboam ventured to take was at once to alter or corrupt the established religion, in opposition to the written word of God, which could not be misinterpreted. It was just as if a prince should introduce and establish the Roman Catholic religion into a Protestant kingdom, in opposition to the clear and standing law of the land. And in so important a step Jeroboam judged it expedient to take counsel, which would, at least, render the counsellors who agreed with him as blameable as he was himself; and you know that those who are near a throne do too commonly fall in with the measures, however illegal or pernicious, which they know are agreeable to the prince.

Having, from sacred history, offered to your view some things which may seem to impeach the understanding, and leave some stain upon the character of Rehoboam, I joyfully take notice of one thing which is surely to his honour: He repented; threatenings from God had their due effect upon him; his heart underwent a salutary change; he changed his measures, and I think it probable that he changed his men also. When Shishak had invaded Judea, "Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the Lord, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore

have I also left you in the hand of Shishak. Whereupon the princes of Israel, and the king, humbled themselves, and they said, 'The Lord is righteous.' Formerly, the king was high-minded, and spake roughly; he is now serious, humble, and devout. He had, it seems, by this time dismissed the young counsellors, being convinced that they had dreadfully misled him, embroiled his affairs, lost him ten provinces of his father's kingdom, and put him in danger of losing the whole. We no longer hear of the young men grown up with him; the king is now attended by the princes of Judah, of Israel; these princes, who five years before "hearkened to the word of the Lord," and declined to "go up and fight against their brethren." The kingdom was to be sorely chastised, "that they might know the difference between God's service and the service of a foreign king." But the king and the princes had repented, and it was not to be destroyed; for "when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance, and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the Lord turned from him, that he would not destroy him altogether. And also in Judah things went well."

I have explained this historical passage of scripture in the best way I could. I conclude the discourse with a few more remarks.

1st, The first remark I make, is, That it is an easy thing to govern mankind. The bulk of men are, as I may say, haltered; they are born to serve; they are willing, ever desirous to be led; they submit and live in quietness under any government that is but half tolerable. If there be insurrections or revolts in any state or empire, princes or their ministers have com-

monly themselves to blame. If princes will pay a becoming regard to the established religion,—if they will govern by the known and equitable laws of the land,—if they will execute justice impartially,—if they will abstain from atrocious and bloody acts of oppression,—if they will preserve inviolated the rights, the privileges, and ancient charters granted to the people; in all ordinary cases, there will be no insurrection, no revolt at all. Even though rights be encroached upon, or taxes augmented, if it is slowly and gradually done; the people will still be quiet. Indeed, when, like the Israelites, a people have been long overburdened with a grievous yoke, and see coming upon them all at once an additional burden, which would crush them to the ground, and render life itself insupportable, they may sometimes be exasperated and provoked to act as that people did; and if there be unanimity among many tribes or provinces, who have separate interests, and were many of them formerly jealous of one another, this seems to be a decisive proof, that the provocation given them hath been extremely great. But how quiet and peaceable subjects are, even under despotic rule, we may be fully satisfied, by surveying the state of the known world as it is at present. Consider how wretched men are in eastern kingdoms and empires; consider the deplorable slavery of the subjects in Turkey, in Russia, and in some other kingdoms and states in Europe, where the common people are, they say, driven to market, and sold along with the land on which they pine away their lives in misery. Yet in all these states the people live quietly, and seldom make any insurrection; they couch down under the mighty burden; they “bow the shoulder, and become servants unto tribute.” Well would it become any successor to a throne, where the subjects are so wretched, to pity their lamentable condition, and of his own accord to grant them what the ten tribes so earnestly sought

from Rehoboam: "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father and his heavy yoke, which he put upon us, lighter." Such a prince would feel a generous pleasure; for he would hear a relieved and grateful people say, with tears of joy, Thou hast made our burden lighter, we will serve thee!

2d, I remark, That though subjects may judge they are aggrieved by some particular laws, and feel themselves overburdened by a heavy yoke, yet, in all ordinary cases, it is their duty to yield obedience to the lawful magistrate. I dare not say, that resistance is in all possible cases criminal. This doctrine, absurd and slavish as it is, hath sometimes been fashionable in this country. It is not yet a hundred years since passive-obedience and non-resistance was, from many pulpits in Britain, weekly obtruded upon the easy credulity of an injured and abused people; and, amidst the wonderful changes that happen daily, it may soon usurp the pulpit again, and become as fashionable as ever. But I think of the glorious Revolution, and cannot but approve of the noble stand that was then made against popery and arbitrary power; a stand, by which the British constitution was improved and settled, and a foundation was laid for that great, that national happiness, which hath been enjoyed under the illustrious and amiable princes of the Hanoverian line. However, government is the ordinance of God; and anarchy, rebellion, or civil war in a country, are any of them so dreadful, that subjects ought to suffer much before they begin to think of resisting established authority: They ought, dutifully, and earnestly, and repeatedly, to petition the throne for redress; they ought to wait long and patiently for that relief which they wish for. And unless their yoke, like that of the Israelites, be altogether intolerable, and unless they be almost sure of bettering their condition by resistance, they ought not

to resist at all; they ought, both from a sense of duty, and from a regard to self-preservation, to obey; and if they disobey, they ought to submit with patience to the sufferings which may be lawfully inflicted upon them.

3d, I remark, That when a free people are bereaved of their liberty, the prince is commonly much less blameable than his ministers and counsellors. I do not think that Rehoboam was obstinately bent to rule arbitrarily. If, as I have so often said, the counsel of those grown up with him had been the same with that of the old men who had stood before his father, his answer to the tribes would have been very different from what it was. And, in governments where the legislature consists of several branches, it is natural to expect that the prince will strive to rule without constraint, according to his own judgment and sense of things; for the love of power is natural to every man: And if senators, and those assembled to take care of the rights and liberty of the common people, are altogether passive; if they act as if they had no sense, no opinion, no judgment of their own; if they tamely agree to every requisition that is made by the prince or his minister; and if, in consequence of this tame, this sequacious behaviour, the liberty of a nation is lost, it is not the prince who is to be blamed; he hath acted naturally in his station: It is the senators and others who have done wrong; they have betrayed their country; the blame lies at their door. And one cannot help regretting, that almost every minister of state strives, with all his might, to increase the prerogative of the crown, and to abridge the privileges of the subject. This is the more to be wondered at, as the continuance of a minister in place depends upon the mere will of the sovereign; the minister may next day be turned down to mix with the people whose rights he hath shamefully encroached upon. The conduct I speak of, can, I think, pro-

ceed from nothing but vile adulation, or as vile a desire to accumulate a ministerial estate.

4th, From the temper of Rehoboam toward the Israelites, every master or superior should learn not to be harsh toward his dependents. The poorest dependents may have it in their power to retaliate, and may be exasperated to retaliate in a very dreadful manner. But severity toward inferiors is surely unmanly and unbecoming. The labouring part of mankind, especially those who till the ground, should be treated with lenity, and allowed to live some way comfortably upon the fruit of their labour; and yet very often this is not the case: The new master says, in effect, to those poor laborious and useful people, as Rehoboam said to the ten tribes, "My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke." It ought not to be so; nor should masters of any kind treat their servants with rigour. If providence hath placed them in that humble station, they are, however, partakers of the same nature with their masters, and have the same exalted hopes of glory. Every thing reasonable should be done by the masters to render their condition as agreeable as possible. "Masters," says the great apostle, "give unto your servants that which is just and equal, forbearing threatening, knowing that ye also have a master in heaven, neither is there any respect of persons with him." My next remark is,

5th, That in this history we have a striking instance of the uncertainty and short duration of worldly greatness, of opulence, and of liberty itself. The kingdom of Judah, united to that of Israel, had been awful and respectable in the time of David and Solomon; but, weakened by the revolt of the ten tribes, Rehoboam was not able to protect the small remaining kingdom of Judah. Solomon had made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones; and in particular the richness of the temple was immense. But "the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures

of the king's house, were all taken and carried away" in the reign of Rehoboam. It was but five years after Solomon's death, that Shishak king of Egypt, came and carried away with him the gold vessels of the temple; and, by forcing Rehoboam to pay him tribute, made the kingdom of Judah a province of Egypt. The gold laid up by David, the gold which Solomon acquired by commerce, and the gold which he levied from his subjects, by the heavy yoke he laid on them; all, even all of it, soon became the prey of a rapacious spoiler. How transient is wealth and human glory! How quickly may a nation lose its liberty, and become tributary to some powerful neighbour! A nation may now be free, and may soon be in bondage. A people may be rich, and may soon be impoverished. So also may any individual; "Why then set ye your heart on that which is not? for riches make themselves wings, and flee away as an eagle towards heaven. Why then make the gold your hope? or the fine gold your confidence?" Why lay a grievous yoke on the poor, that so you may lay up treasures on earth? "Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven," where no spoiler can come, where no thief can break through and steal. Assert yourselves into that liberty of which all the powers of earth and hell cannot bereave you; freedom of soul, liberty from the bondage of corruption, "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." By self-government, and by faith in Christ, you will obtain this liberty; and if "the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed." Some of you may be servants, may be in straits, in worldly trouble; yield yourselves voluntarily to be conducted by the word and the Spirit of Jesus; there is nothing grievous in his yoke; no slavery, but the most perfect freedom under his government. He calls upon you; "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and low-

ly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls ; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

6th, I remark further, that the quiet, the strength, and even the independence of a kingdom, is endangered, when any of its grandees, or men of rank and talents, are provoked at home, and forced to seek protection in some neighbouring inimical kingdom. It is not to be expected, but that a man of talents, who hath been harshly used in his own country, will exert himself to irritate and assist those who protect him against those who have injured him. David, indeed, when he was on his march to fight against Saul, was restrained from shedding the blood of his countrymen ; for the Philistines ordered him to depart to his home. And Themistocles, when the critical period came, choosed rather to die a voluntary death than to help his royal benefactor to conquer Greece. But Jeroboam, more corrupted than that brave Athenian ; Jeroboam, stimulated by revenge, fired by ambition, and encouraged by that esteem which he knew the ten tribes had of his political and military talents, and perhaps trusting also, that Ahijah's prophecy would certainly be fulfilled, did all he could to split the united kingdom of Judah, which would render it less formidable to its neighbours than it had been under David and Solomon ; for, as David had been a great warrior, had conquered Edom, and even Elóth and Ezion-geber, ports upon the Red Sea, in the neighbourhood of Egypt ; it can hardly be doubted, that Egypt dreaded the military spirit of the Israelitish nation, and even its commercial spirit, by which it had grown so rich and powerful in the reign of Solomon. Hence it was that Jeroboam met with a kind reception in the court of Shishak : He aimed and expected to be king of the ten tribes ; and it is highly probable, that, as soon as he reached Egypt, he entered on the properest means to execute his plan, in which he was assisted by Shishak, who encouraged

the factious spirit, and pushed on the revolt of the ten tribes. Nay, I must presume, that a league between Shishak and Jeroboam was early entered into, and subsisted long; and that it was because Rehoboam was pressed and over-awed by the armies of Egypt, on the one hand, and by those of the ten tribes, on the other, that, without striking a single stroke, he delivered his capital to be plundered by Shishak, and his kingdom to be tributary to Egypt. Jeroboam cooperated with Shishak, and Shishak received the spoil. Thus it is that a designing prince, by an unexpensive kindness to a fugitive of rank and ability, is enabled to embroil the affairs of a rival kingdom; and thus a powerful kingdom doth commonly, like the lion in the fable, seize by force on all the conquests that have been made by itself and its less powerful allies.

I remark, in the last place, that even in Ahijah's prediction, that ten tribes were to be given to Jeroboam, the splitting of the kingdom is accounted a judgment of God, a severe punishment of irreligion and idolatry. Indeed, Ahijah's prophecy is not a bare prediction; it is a declaration of cause and effect, the stated order of God's providence. The people had gone into idolatry, and they are delivered over to be led into a system of idolatry, by the worldly wisdom of Jeroboam: "For thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee, because that they have forsaken me, and worshipped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh, the god of the Moabites, and Milcom, the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments." And is there not cause to look on this war, which is already kindled, and which threatens a division of the British empire, as a judgment of heaven for our impiety and wickedness? Most certainly we deserve a stroke; for

we have been forgetful of God.—At the Revolution, our civil liberty was secured, and the pure religion was established; the two British kingdoms were (the happy reverse of what was done by Jeroboam) cemented into one by the incorporating Union; and to us a wide avenue was laid open to opulence. What have we done in return for all this bounty of providence? Why, religion hath been impudently despised; the divinity of the gospel hath been questioned and opposed; the sense of right and wrong hath been denied; daring attempts have been made to destroy the very foundations of religion and morality; impious and worthless persons have crept into offices of trust; and “the wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted;” men who are profane, debauched, unjust, fraudulent, cruel, have been countenanced and encouraged in their impiety and wickedness. In our land, such impiety and wickedness have been practised, as have, in all ages, been the forerunners of God’s judgments upon sinful nations; many have thrown aside the very appearance of religion.—What judgments God hath denounced and executed against the Jews, most of you have heard or read;—what God will do, or how he will deal with you, I have no authority to say;—what he may do, you all know;—what you deserve, every person ought seriously to consider. Of all this it is my duty to put you in mind, and to call upon you to amend your ways and your doings, if you wish to escape the judgments wherewithal you are threatened. Trust not to appearances; that opulence, that elevation to which some of you have reached, by your industry under the best constitution of government, may soon be blasted, and the very constitution itself undergo the fate of other countries where civil liberty was once enjoyed.—And I have authority to tell you, that if you repent, and live by faith, all will be well with you, probably in time, and most certainly through eternity. When Reho-

boam and the princes of Judah humbled themselves, and no doubt the people humbled themselves also, the wrath of the Lord was turned away, and they heard the voice of God saying, "They have humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them." In one word, my bréthren, keep in mind the fluctuating and uncertain state of all human affairs; turn your attention, and bend your course, toward that city which hath foundations, and that kingdom which cannot be moved. May God bless, &c.

SERMON IV.

ACHAN'S TRESPASS IN THE ACCURSED THING CONSIDERED.

Preached in the Church of Govan, on the Public Fast, 1778.

But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing : for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing : and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel.

JOSHUA, vii. 1. to the end.

I WILL first explain the chapter, and then offer a few obvious remarks upon the striking history it contains. These remarks may appear to be unconnected, and the enlightened hearer may possibly desiderate that unity without which a discourse is tiresome, because it is imperfect; but a little variety will be some sort of compensation for that imperfection. Besides the ordinary parts of social worship, the explication and remarks I speak of are all that I intend as the public exercises of this fast-day; and, if I be able, I will recite all I am to say at one breath, without interruption; but if my strength begin to fail, I will as usual stop in the middle, and after singing a few verses, proceed to what may remain of this intended short discourse.

Jacob's family consisted of seventy or seventy-five persons when he went down with them into Egypt; and after they and their posterity had dwelt there above two hundred years, their going up to settle in the land of Canaan is certainly one of the most celebrated migrations of ancient times.—It is so in holy

writ, and it is so also in the page of heathen historians. Phalantus, at the head of a few hundreds of Parthenians, migrating from Lacedemon to Tarentum, is but a diminutive affair, compared with six hundred thousand fighting men, their wives, their children, their cattle, travelling through the deserts of Arabia to Palestine, the land which God had promised to Abraham, their illustrious ancestor, conducted by a great personage, who was the soul of the expedition, was their captain, their legislator, and their judge. This you know was Moses.

Moses, the man of God, was now dead; he had, by conquest, got the lands of Og and Sihon, to the eastward of Jordan, which were sufficient for two of the twelve tribes to settle upon; the care of providing settlements for the other ten tribes did now devolve on Joshua. To effect so great a work, that brave and vigilant captain lost no time; he began with religion; he set the soldiers to the performance of some ceremonies and solemn acts of the Jewish system, to fit them for what was before them: He was called upon by God himself to be strong and of good courage; he had passed the Jordan by a miracle, for at that time the river overflowed all his banks: "And, as they that bare the ark came unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, the water that came from above stood and rose up upon an heap." Joshua soon advanced to Jericho, the famous city of palm-trees; there he met with the angel of the covenant, with his sword drawn in his hand, and by him he was encouraged. The operations of war were instantly begun; Jericho was straitly invested; for seven days, "seven priests, bearing seven trumpets of rams-horns, compassed the city, and blew with the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them." On the first of the seven days they did so. "And on the second day they compassed the

city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days. And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times. And it came to pass, at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout, for the Lord hath given you the city. And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein;—and you, in any wise, keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord, and they shall come into the treasury of the Lord. So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat; so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city; and they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.” Here, most certainly, was a very dreadful carnage: All that we can say of it is, that the ruin of the Amorites was foretold some ages before; and the cup of their iniquity was now full. God hath right to destroy the wicked, and he can employ wind, or rain, or fire, or wild beasts, or even men, good or bad, to destroy them. And we may further say, that the extirpation of the Canaanites by the Jews was no doubt appointed for just reasons, though we do not fully see them; but we see and know, that what the Jews did by the command of God, in this case, is never to be drawn into a precedent; we are to act from the sense of justice and humanity, agreeably to the eternal and invariable laws of righteousness.

At Jericho, the Israelites met with a very cheap victory, and probably they expected a continuance of such rapid success; but, in the providence of God, a check is given to their sanguine expectations, occasioned by a daring sin which had been committed. It is this incident with which the chapter opens. "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel." A proclamation had been issued in the camp, warning every person against touching the spoils of Jericho, under pain of death, and yet the children of Israel, that is, one of the children of Israel, had committed a trespass in the accursed thing; for it was at collecting the spoils of Jericho that this had been done. Accursed, when applied to living creatures, men, oxen, sheep, or asses, signifies, that they are to be violently put to death, by being stoned or strangled, and then burnt with fire; but when silver, gold, brass, iron, are said to be accursed, the meaning is, that they are consecrated to God for the maintenance of his priests, or the support of civil government. Achan's sin was therefore sacrilege; it was stealing or purloining God's property; and, considering the circumstances in which the Israelites were at this time, it was extremely proper that such a charge about the accursed thing should be given, chiefly, I think, for two reasons: 1st, 'To teach the army subordination and obedience to the orders of their general. It is well known, that when a battle is gained, or a city taken, it is difficult to restrain the soldiers but a little from the plunder; and many a victory, half-gained, hath been totally lost, because the army began too soon to seize upon the baggage or the spoil. 2d, Because money was to be accumulated for public uses. Jericho was a rich city; the silver and gold found in it were to come into the

treasury of the Lord; and if any person should dare to intermeddle with the accursed thing, the spoils of this city, which was first to be taken, the immediate, the public, and dreadful punishment to be inflicted on him, would in future terrify every person from the like purloining and sacrilege. Hence it was, that God saw proper to mention particularly the several aggravating circumstances of Achan's sin, as we shall see in the 11th and 12th verses.

Before Joshua had any apprehension that Achan had taken of the accursed thing, being intent to carry on the war with all prudent expedition, he dispatched some of his officers to inspect the strength of the city which he intended next to assault. "And the men went and viewed Ai. And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; for they are but few. So there went up about three thousand men, and they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote about thirty-six men; for they chased them from before the gate, and smote them in the going down; wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water."

There were but twelve thousand, men, women, and children, in the town of Ai; and one would think that three thousand soldiers, especially when assured beforehand of being assisted by the captain of the Lord's host, was a sufficient number to cope with all the fighting men that could be there; but the Israelites were courageous before, and they are now timid. Hath not every thinking person observed, that at different times the same man is extremely different from himself? Sometimes the scholar can think, can study, can compose; at another time he can fix his attention on no subject, he cannot arrange his thoughts at all: At one time the soldier can look danger full in the face, and, without being dismayed, perform his duty; at another time he trembles like an aspin-leaf, is in

fear where no fear is, and runs when there is no man to pursue him. This is a circumstance in the natural history of man, which, for aught I know, cannot be rationally accounted for. It is not always to be accounted for from some alteration in the body, with respect to sleep, to labour or rest, to food or drink, or disorder in the mind, occasioned by good or bad news concerning our outward circumstances, or our friends; nor yet from a sense of shame, or rebukes of conscience, for any bad or shameful actions we may have done: Vicissitudes of weakness, of imprudence, of timidity, come upon us we cannot tell whence nor how. What I here say relates to men in the ordinary course of life; but in the case before us there is an immediate interposal of God himself; he gives the soldiers a trembling of heart; they flee and are chased by those whom a little before they had despised; they are in a panic, like those of the army of the Philistines at Gibeah, when there was none but Jonathan and his armour-bearer to frighten them: "There was a trembling in the host in the field, and among all the people; the garrison and the spoilers they also trembled, and the earth quaked; so it was a very great trembling." Indeed, if the Israelites who went up the hill to fight against Ai, began to suspect that they had embarked in an unrighteous war, were going to raze a city, and massacre its inhabitants, man, woman, and child, though these inhabitants had never done them any harm; haunted by such a suspicion, they might, though brave and well disciplined, flee before the timid and undisciplined men of Ai. It is impossible to conceive what a few brave soldiers will do, when they are thoroughly convinced of the righteousness of the cause they are fighting for. It is equally impossible to say how great a number of brave and well disciplined soldiers, if they entertain suspicions of the righteousness of the war, will, like the Israelites at Ai, turn their backs, and suffer themselves

to be chased by a few undisciplined peasants, or timid rabble of a country. But though the hearts of the people melted, and became as water, there is no evidence that they ever suspected the war to be unjust; neither they nor their gallant commander appear to have had any such thoughts; for when the children of Israel fled before the men of Ai, Joshua was surprised, and thrown into deep distress. "And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord, until the even-tide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads." It doth not appear whether or not Joshua was along with the party who went up to destroy Ai. I should rather think that he staid in the camp. However that be, we see here that astonishment, indignation, concern for the public, sorrow and fear, boil in the breast of that great man. Here are all the outward symptoms of the deepest affliction and grief; the general rent his clothes; he fell to the earth, on his face, before the ark, the visible symbol of the divine presence, till the evening, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust on their heads; a strong sense of shame, a dread of being disappointed where they thought themselves sure of success; driven backward and destroyed by those whom they expected they would easily drive before them and destroy; and, especially, a dread lest the neighbouring kingdoms, observing that an Israelitish army was chased by so few, should all combine to chase them out of the country. But this sorrow, this fear, this humiliation, is of the genuine kind; it brings them to God, to pour out their hearts before him; for Joshua, after he and the elders had "rent their clothes, and put dust on their heads, said, Alas! O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan. O Lord God, what shall I say, when Israel turneth

their back before their enemies!"—"For the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land, shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth; and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?" This is spoken after the manner among men; and it is a devout expostulation in behalf of God's people, and the glory of God's name. It is like the pleading of Moses for the people, when God had said to him, "How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me? I will smite them, and disinherit them, and make of thee a great nation. Then Moses said unto the Lord, If thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee, will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people to the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness." Such was the humble and suppliant posture of Joshua and the elders of Israel, when a part of their army had been defeated and chased by a despised enemy; such was the devout style in their address to God, expressive of their concern for his glory; they penitently say, alas! and pray that God may return to defend and protect their church and infant nation. And suffer me to observe, that such too is the style of that royal proclamation, by which we are called upon to assemble and keep this fast-day. The style is surely devout; and we have no reason to believe but that it proceeds from sincerity of heart, "That we and our people may humble ourselves before Almighty God, in order to obtain the pardon of our sins; and, in the most devout and solemn manner, send up our prayers and supplications to the Divine Majesty, for averting those heavy judgments which our manifold sins and provocations have most justly deserved." Joshua and the elders of Israel prostrate themselves before Jehovah, in a time of national distress; the august monarch of these kingdoms, together with many of his

nobles, do, and call upon us to do the same. Subjects, it is said, are prone to imitate the vices of princes and of personages in high rank; would it not be wise and right rather to imitate their good qualities? Most certainly; it is to be deeply lamented, because it seems to be a prognostic of national ruin, that a spirit of irreligion hath unhappily come athwart at least the northern part of these united kingdoms: Few, who are either born to an estate, or who make a fortune by successful trade or industry, few of either sort have any public profession of religion at all. But can history furnish out a single instance of any empire or kingdom that continued long in prosperity, whilst it had lost all regard to any sort of religion? For my part, I know no instance of that kind. And if this kingdom doth not contribute to its depopulation and ruin by its fond pursuit of this tedious American war, God hath many other arrows in his quiver to ruin a people who despise him, and who of course disregard the everlasting laws of sobriety, of truth, of integrity, of justice, and honour. But I will not deviate from the text before me.—Joshua did not yet know the cause of the defeat, the chace, and affront, that had happened to three thousand of his army; he had fallen down, and he still lies with his face upon the earth; but God comes to comfort him, and graciously calls upon him to arise. “The Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou upon thy face? rise up,” thou art innocent; but “Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them.” In times of ignorance there hath been much idle talk about the covenants with God, and the number of them. Every command of God, as we see here, is a covenant; and every covenant is a command; for, properly speaking, it is impossible that weak mortals can bargain or covenant with the supreme God. “Israel hath sinned,” and the several aggravations of that sin, as I

hinted above, are particularly mentioned. For they have even “taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even amongst their own stuff.” It is said, “That the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel;” and “therefore they could not stand before their enemies, because they were accursed.” But it was only one man who was guilty; why are six hundred thousand charged as being guilty of one man’s sin? Let it be observed, that whosoever was privy to Achan’s sin, and concealed it, was in some sort guilty. These ought to have published the trespass, that the guilty person might be punished, or removed from the camp, and from among the people. But the reason that all are charged with being guilty of one man’s sin, is, perhaps, that none of them might dare to be guilty of the like in time coming. A people of a gross and cloudy understanding were to learn to obey the commands of their general, and to withhold their hands from money devoted to public and religious uses. Without these lessons, as I have observed already, they could not expect to conquer Canaan, nor to have a treasury, gold and silver, the sinews of war, for that conquest; and, till they inflicted condign punishment upon the transgressors, God tells them that he would withdraw from them: “Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from amongst you.”

Then God directs Joshua how the people were to be prepared, and how the guilty person was to be detected. “Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow; for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, ‘There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel. Thou canst not stand before thine enemies until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.’” This sanctification consisted in external lustrations, in washing their bodies, washing of their clothes, abstinence from foul actions, and

being pure in heart, because God was in a solemn manner to converse with them. In this manner the people were sanctified before God spoke the ten commands to them; and thus they were to be sanctified, when it was to be discovered who had taken of the accursed thing. This was to be done next morning. "In the morning therefore ye shall be brought, according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the Lord taketh, shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the Lord shall take, shall come by households; and the household which the Lord shall take, shall come man by man." The severity of the punishment to be inflicted is also intimated to Joshua; "And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing, shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath, because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel." I cannot tell whether Joshua kept secret the instructions God had given him, or if he allowed the method of detecting the person guilty of the accursed thing, and the dreadful punishment he was to suffer, to be divulged in the camp. If this last was the case, it is a wonder that Achan did not attempt to make his escape. A British offender, in that sort, would have taken a trip beyond sea, pretending, perhaps, that he was going abroad for his health. However this be, "Joshua rose up early in the morning." I cannot help taking notice, that the early rising of this brave man is often taken notice of in his history. In this particular, he is set before us as a pattern, whom every man of any spirit should imitate. The tradesman or artificer, who aims to make a fortune, or to be independent, should rise early, and transact his business; the student should start from the bed of sloth, to see the sun rise in his glory, to acquaint himself with the nature, the history, the duty, and highest happiness of men; the prince, the general, the minister of state, should, like

Joshua, rise up early, to promote the good and happiness of that society, be it great or small, which hath committed itself to his care, to distribute justice to individuals and to the public.

By the care of Joshua, Achan, the son of Carmi, was taken. The several tribes, and families, and households, and individuals of the household taken, had past in review before the Lord, and the lot fell upon the tribe of Judah, and upon Achan in particular. Here it is to be observed, that the person detected to have taken of the accursed thing, is no mean man; he is one of the princes of the most honourable of all the tribes; his great-grandfather was brother to Phares, an ancestor of our Saviour, according to the flesh. The manner in which Joshua examined this unhappy criminal doth also merit our attention. In modern times, a prince would have committed the like business to a secretary, and the secretary to some subaltern or inferior person: Joshua, however, examines into the matter himself; and, in this examination, though he be general of the army, and in great sorrow for the sin that had been done, and the affront to the army, of which it was the cause; he proceeds, however, with all that mildness that could have been expected from a parent or a brother. "My son," he says, "give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him, and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me." Nothing is more unseemly than to insult a prisoner, or to upbraid an unhappy offender with the criminality of what he hath done. Joshua requests Achan to make an immediate and open confession: This is giving glory to God; it is to acknowledge that he knows the most secret iniquity; and Achan very readily makes a full confession, with all that sorrow which seems to indicate a real repentance. "And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus

and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them, and behold they are hid in the earth, in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it." The confession is penitent; it is full; and it is frankly made: And had the offence been of a private nature, and committed against Joshua in his personal capacity, I make no doubt but Joshua would have generously and immediately granted Achan a full pardon. When a person of any tolerable condition or character commits an offence against us, and afterwards comes and expresses his sorrow for having done so, we are in pain, and sorry to see him make such a confession to us, and we forgive him at once. But the offence of Achan was of a public nature; it affected the church and the commonweal.

Achan had confessed; but further steps were to be taken to impress all the congregation with horror and with abhorrence of the sin that had been committed. For this purpose, "Joshua sent messengers, and they ran unto the tent, and behold it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it. And they took them," took the Babylonish garment, the wedge of gold and the silver, "and brought them unto Joshua, and unto all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the Lord;" that is, before the ark, the symbol of God's presence in the camp; they laid them upon some high and conspicuous place, and every one in that great congregation saw them, or went up to see them, to look upon them. This, they were told, this is the accursed thing, this gold, this silver, this garment, stolen by Achan, is the cause that the anger of the Lord is kindled against Israel, that Israel cannot stand before their enemies, that they have been chased and smitten by the men of Ai. When the monuments of Achan's guilt had been sufficiently inspected, his

dreadful punishment followed. But first Joshua, and all Israel with him, seem to have sat as a grand assize to condemn him. "Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters," (who it seems had been privy to his theft, and had concealed it) "and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had; and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled Israel?" The affront which the army had sustained, in consequence of the sin of Achan, had troubled and vexed the congregation of Israel. "The Lord," Joshua added, "shall trouble thee this day." And most certainly Achan must have been vexed to a degree that can scarce be conceived, to see his tent, his cattle, the monuments of his covetousness, and even his sons and his daughters, all carried along to the valley of Achor, to be burned with him in the same fire: "For all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones." I have said before, that Achan's repentance seems to have been sincere; so that, though he had been suffered to live, it was not likely he would ever have been guilty of sacrilege again. But it sometimes happens, that, for the interest of the public, a guilty person is to be punished in a more severe, conspicuous, and striking manner, than the guilt seems to deserve; and this seems to have been the unhappy case of Achan. The army, the rude and unformed people, were impressed with fear; they learned to obey their general; and I do not remember, that after this time any of them embezzled the things devoted to the service of God during all the days of Joshua. They took still another step to make the sin and punishment of Achan subservient to the public good of Israel: "They raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day." This great heap was like an inscription upon his

grave-stone; this would perpetuate the memory of his covetousness, of his sacrilege, and his being stoned to death and burned for it, better than any historical narrative could have done. Why or whence is this heap of stones? It is the grave of Achan, who took of the accursed thing. This would, by terror and shame, operate upon the minds of that people, hitherto perhaps incapable of being worked upon by finer motives. Achan being now punished, the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger, and the Israelites soon began to be again victorious. By means of greater numbers led out to battle, and an artful ambuscade, they soon exterminated the men of Ai, with the women and children, just as they had done at Jericho before. I finish the explication with this single reflection, That if Achan's purloining of the public treasure occasioned such disgrace to the Israelitish army, what must be the case of a nation, where many of its counsellors are chargeable with Achan's crime? If it shall ever happen hereafter, that not one person only, but many, twelve or sixteen, for instance, or forty-five, or two, or even five hundred, or at least a great majority of the number, are careless about the public interest, grasping at the national revenue, and each of them coveting to enrich himself by seizing on the shickels of silver and the wedge of gold, must not such a nation suffer disappointment and disgrace? Its revenues are embezzled, its strength is decayed; its armies are marred or chased by contemptible enemies; it is sick, it is in a disease which is like to proceed from evil to worse. Can any remedy be found to save it from political death? If, whilst the legislative body is corrupted, the morals of the peasantry are yet tolerably pure, something may be done; for even in the most despotic government the last appeal is to the people; the people may, by their cries and endeavours, find means to remove the patrons and tools of corruption from about the throne; by inquiries into

misconduct, they may terrify the generals to act with spirit, and even oblige the statesman to shake his hand from holding of bribes. But if the people be also corrupted, silent, unaffected, unalarmed, when, by the vilest measures, the nation hath been loaded with disgrace, there seems to be nothing that can save it from dissolution; the fatal, the destined period of its existence as a state hath approached; the cup of its iniquity is full; it will first be a taunt and a proverb by its neighbours, and then these same neighbours will probably invade and conquer it. Thus all the ancient empires of the world came to an end; Babylon, Athens, Sparta, Rome herself, after all her conquests and worldly glory. We now keep a fast-day, that this may not for a long time be the case of Great Britain; which may God of his infinite mercy grant, &c.

Having explained the chapter, I proceed to make some remarks upon the alarming history it contains. And, in the first place, I remark, 1. That a people who have formerly been successful in war, are apt to be elated with a high opinion of their own wisdom and strength, and to despise the strength of those against whom they are next to carry on a war. The Israelites had succeeded against two kings on the east side Jordan; they had got Jericho without any other labour but that of going straight forward, and killing the inhabitants, after the city-wall had fallen. They therefore say, "Let not all the people go up and smite Ai; for they are but few." By the exercise of war, soldiers acquire skill in war; and, trusting to that skill, they sometimes disregard the God of battles; and, from a vain audaciousness, they precipitately rush abroad into dangerous war, when equity and prudence might call upon them to stay at home, and live in peace. Thus Rabshakeh defies the living God, and speaks of Sennacherib his master, as if he had been invincible. "Beware," he says to the Jews,

“left Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The Lord will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim? and have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?” Such too was the pride and the vain assurance of Pharaoh, that he would destroy the people of God when they were escaping out of Egypt. “The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.” And, in a special manner, this haughty expectation of success operates strongly, when those whom a proud nation hath vanquished already, are reputed to have been braver than those whom it afterwards intends to attack. The proud style of language, then, is, “Is not Calno as Carchemish? Shall I not, as I have done to Samaria, so do to Jerusalem?” And I may here observe, that such too was the pride of many people, when the nation unfortunately entered into this lasting American war. The forces of Great Britain were thought invincible; the strength of the colonies was reputed as nothing; and their souls were represented as being altogether timid and dastardly: And this was not only the opinion and style among many of us at home, who, being uninstructed, have not had access to be informed what a wonderful skill and courage in war quiet and peaceable people may attain after they have been roused and united by repeated provocations; and have, from dread of slavery, applied long, and with ardour, to get themselves disciplined and trained in all the exercises of war: Not only these among ourselves despised the Colonists, but even some constituent members of the high council of the kingdom are said to have publicly represented them as being altogether weak and despicable. Such language, such boasting, must proceed from pride, mixed, I fear, with

a considerable degree of ignorance. It is at least unbecoming; it may forebode something very grievous. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. Let not him that putteth on his armour boast, as he that putteth it off." Boasting should be excluded, at least in the beginning of a war. Alas! we have heard of boasting, to which no success that the British arms have hitherto met with, doth, in any tolerable degree, correspond. I remark,

2. That to have a high conceit of our own wisdom and strength, particularly in the affair of war, hath oftentimes been the cause of shameful disappointment and ruin. The inhabitants of Ai "were but few, so there went up thither of the people about three thousand, and they fled before the men of Ai." It is, I think, probable, that, besides the supernatural effect of the accursed thing, the people from pride went up to Ai, without a due regard to the order and discipline of war. Hence they suddenly flee; they are chased, they are smitten by the men of Ai; just as if, in modern times, a well disciplined army should, with two or three rounds of ammunition, venture to attack a number of incensed country people, and soon find themselves obliged to flee, and be disgracefully chased by an undisciplined rabble whom they had despised. Great is the disappointment, and miserable is the disgrace, that often springs from pride and self-conceit. The inland, or the distant provinces of an empire, judging themselves aggrieved, may petition for a redress of the grievances which they think they suffer: Prudence will grant, that such petitions, if decent, should obtain a fair hearing, whether they be well-founded or not; because, by a few lenient expressions, the complaints may be removed; but, from a contemptuous defiance of the petitioners, and a high opinion of our wisdom and military force, such petitions may be rejected; and, from asperity of language, and hard usage, the kingdom may be unne-

cessarily, at least prematurely, thrown into the flame and expence of a dangerous war. It was from a high opinion of his military strength, that the son of Solomon lost no fewer than ten provinces of his dominions; and from similar causes similar effects will ever be produced. It is from pride, that a statesman, perhaps no ways renowned for skill in the theory or the practice of war, may venture to send to an officer in a distant quarter such orders as cannot be executed. If the officer attempts to execute them, he and his army will be in danger of being, like the Israelites at Ai, chased back again, or smitten in the day of battle, or obliged to surrender their arms, and submit to the disgrace of being prisoners of war. The soldier who is proud is not cautious. "Pride was not made for man." To trust to our wisdom and power, is to throw off our dependence on God. "God hates the proud and arrogant. I am against thee, O most proud." In his holy providence, it often happens, that the "lofty looks of man are humbled, and the haughtiness of men is brought low." The boasts of Sennacherib against God's people were vain, and without effect. "Behold, saith the Lord, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land." I might here show, that a high opinion of our own wisdom produceth as dreadful effects in economy, and in moral conduct, as it doth in politics and in war. A vain person, from a proud opinion of his skill and his good fortune, ventures to go deep in games of hazard, loseth his estate, and plungeth himself into beggary and disgrace. A young man, trusting in his ability to resist temptations, goeth out of his way, seeking opportunities to go into the way of vice, when he should listen to the wise man's counsel: "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away."—"The prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself, but the simple pass on, and are punished." But I proceed to remark further,

3. That to purloin or embezzle any part of the national revenue, is, in proportion, a natural cause of national weakness, disappointment, and disgrace. The disgrace of the Israelites before Ai happened, because God had "made the camp of Israel a curse;" and he did so, because they had "committed a trespass in the accursed thing." But, in ordinary times, that is, when Heaven doth not miraculously interpose, to purloin, to embezzle, or misapply the public money, must operate in the way of cause and effect; and sometimes part of the public money may be literally purloined or stolen, just as Achan stole the shekels of silver and the golden wedge. It is, for aught I can see, misapplied, when it is spent in foreign or unnecessary wars, or in providing places, or pensions, or bribes, for any of the legislative body; and it can never be supposed that a wise people could give away their money, but for the defence of the kingdom, and the maintenance of civil government; it cannot be supposed, that a sensible people could put their money into the hands of the first magistrate, to be employed in a manner which tends directly to subvert the public liberty; and to beggar and enslave the body of the people; for, when the revenue is misapplied, new and heavier taxes must be imposed to supply the exigencies of the state; by these taxes, it is evident, the kingdom must be weakened, because it is impoverished. There is, indeed, a new and strange position obtruded upon the world, namely, that the heavier the taxes are, the nation is the more rich and prosperous; because, say they, by means of these taxes, there is a quick circulation of money. However, this new-fangled doctrine is like to go ill down; it is, indeed, so palpably absurd, that I must suppose the understanding of those who espouse it to be blindfolded, either by the expectation of receiving some part of these taxes, or by having already actually received of them; for a bribe or gift "blindeth the

eyes" even "of the wife." To misapply the revenue impoverishes the nation; it also disappoints the people of their just expectations, and brings disgrace upon the kingdom. In the first Dutch war, equally unrighteous and impolitical, Charles II. demanded and obtained very great subsidies from parliament, promising that he would equip a strong fleet, and perform some action of wonderful prowess against the Dutch; but he dissipated all he had got; I need not say how; it was in the manner that that thoughtless and sauntering monarch was in use to spend his treasure; his ships of war were laid up; he made some distant proposals of peace to the enemy; meantime de Ruyter, the Dutch admiral, came up the river Medway, and, by the help of a strong east wind, broke the boom, the cross chain, which, instead of a powerful fleet, was all the defence provided for Britain and the ships in the harbour; he proceeded to Chatham, burnt three or four ships, and carried others off with him. Thus, by the embezzlement and misapplication of the public money, the British shore was, in a time of war, left defenceless, the capital of the empire was alarmed, and, in the judgment of natives and of foreigners, the kingdom was exposed to contempt and disgrace. That to purloin or embezzle the public money impoverishes and disgraces a nation, might be shown at large from history and fact. In proof of this point, I have mentioned but one instance, and that at the distance of a hundred years backward. I will mention no more, lest I should seem to come too near to what may have been done in our own days. I remark,

4. That when any part of the public revenue hath been purloined or misapplied, or when unexpected disgraces in war have happened, it becomes the uncorrupted part of the legislative body to strive that the guilty may be detected.

If the morals of a nation are yet tolerably pure, an

attempt of this sort will probably be successful; where the people are already corrupted, to detect the guilty will always be difficult, and oftentimes impossible.

It is evident from the text, that all the army, the congregation of Israel, are called, are held to be guilty in the trespass of the accursed thing, till it shall be found out who is in fact the guilty person. To make this discovery, Joshua himself is deeply concerned, and all the people concur with him. Even after Achan had made his confession, the messengers ran to his tent, they searched, they found, and came running back with the Babylonish garment, the shekels of silver, and the wedge of gold. That the detection might appear complete, and the proof of Achan's guilt clear and decisive, the accursed thing is laid on some conspicuous place, in full view of the people, just as we bring stolen goods into court where the thief is to be condemned. It was, indeed, easy to find out the guilty, when, by a divine and unerring lot, first the tribe was taken, then the family, then the household, and then the individual of that household. In this case, when the person taken by lot did also confess, the proof was as certain and decisive as if it had been supported by the greatest number of unexceptionable witnesses. But to discover the guilty person now is commonly a matter of infinite difficulty. Will he who is suspected and accused of purloining confess that he hath done so? In this corrupted age it is not likely; and if he be an old offender in that trade, it is almost certain he will deny stoutly, and even offer plausible reasons to show that he is innocent. The difficulty will seem to increase, if ever it shall happen hereafter, that four-fifths of those who alone can legally examine into the guilt, have themselves, in one way or other, fingered some part of the accursed thing. In a corrupted age, this matter is surely difficult, and it is ticklish. I leave it off.—And I presume, that any inquiry, whether a

statesman who gave the orders, or a general who tried to execute these orders, is the most to blame that nothing was done to purpose, may be equally difficult in a time of general corruption. He that hath the most powerful friends will obtain that the documents which might militate against him may be suppressed. In one sense, any such inquiry may be stifled in the beginning, because it will turn out to nothing in the issue; and yet, even in the worst times, such inquiries are not altogether useless, because, from the dread of punishment, or a sense of shame, they may be the means of restraining from the depths of vice those who are not yet thoroughly corrupted. I remark farther,

5. That if a person hath purloined from the public, it is an evidence of ingenuous repentance, when he confesses his crime, and points out where all that he stole is hid, and may be recovered to the public.

Achan's confession hath every mark of being penitential and sincere. "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done." I saw, I coveted, I took,—they are hid in my tent. Here is confession, repentance, and restitution. I feel all the movements of compassion for this Israelitish offender, who, though his repentance was genuine, yet it behoved, that, for the public interest of the church and state of Israel, he should be put to death. I am led to think that his guilt was small, compared with that of many great offenders in modern times, some of whom I might name. The sincerity and frankness of his confession make me to think so; and I imagine, that, if an enlightened sovereign, or an uncorrupted patriot, should, in the mild language of the Hebrew general, address himself to any half-detected offender in a civil or a military department: "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the God of Israel, and make confession to him; and tell me now what thou hast done, hide it not

from me:" I imagine, I say, that few would make a clean breast, or answer with a candour similar to that of Achan. Would a treasurer, deeply guilty, an under-treasurer, or teller in exchequer, say, I beheld the gold as it lay sparkling upon the table; I was struck with its beauty; I coveted it; I took it; it is hid in my house; I have bought land with it; or it is secured for me in a foreign bank.—Or would a general make answer, I might have got myself informed about the motions of the enemy before they fell upon my army in the night-time; but I liked to save for myself as much of the gold as I could, and had not spies enough to bring me proper intelligence. Or, indeed I have sinned; I was in force to attack the enemy in their trenches, and disperse their army; but, liking the honour and emoluments of my office, I was afraid the war might end too soon, whereby I would sink to the rank I had held before I got the command of the army.—Or another; it is true, I believe the revolted provinces, where I was stationed, might have submitted to the clemency of my royal master; but I kept fast hold of the gold wherewithal I should have clothed and fed my men: I saw my soldiers hungry and naked, and, instead of leading them to support my brother general, who about that time was made prisoner, I let them loose to pillage the houses, and drive away the cattle of the innocent peasants; if any of these peasants pretended to defend or hide their effects, or to convey their cattle out of my way, I first called them thieves, next fell upon them with the sword, and then set fire to their villages, and burnt them to the ground.—Or if, by the rueful effect of his violent and foolish measures, a statesman is forced to acknowledge part of his guilt, will he, like Achan, make a thorough confession? will he make that confession frankly, whilst it may be available to remove the public curse? You may, perhaps, hear him say, I made rapidly several violent

laws; I defended them for many years; I see they ought to be repealed; I was wrong in urging the taxation; I kindled the flames of a war, bloody, ruinous, and disgraceful; I am now to offer a confession, which I think better than to continue the war for three or four years longer.—To say all this, is no doubt humiliating; and yet I presume it is confessing by far too little, to make the world believe that his repentance is as sincere as was that of Achan. Few statesmen, in these dregs of time, make any such confession; though it is to be feared there is a variety of striking materials, from which very ample confessions of that sort might be formed. In modern times, few great offenders are detected, fewer incline to make any confession, and fewer still to make restitution. But if the wife or the daughter of a new-made man appears at a birth-day, or a court-ball, dressed in a goodly Babylonish garment, worth many shekels of silver and wedges of gold, adorned with jewels equal in value to half the revenue of a little kingdom; this, this hath sometimes given ground to conjecture, that the husband or father had seen, had coveted, had put forth his hand, and committed a “trespass in the accursed thing.” I remark farther,

6. That neither high rank nor opulence ought to screen egregious criminals from condign punishment. Achan was a person of very high rank; he was the son of Zerah, who was at least the second prince of the tribe of Judah, the most honourable of all the twelve. Nor is his coveting the gold and silver any proof that he was poor; it is rather a presumption that he was rich. In all ages, they were the rich who were the most covetous as well as the most oppressive. “Do not rich men oppress you?” was a question put above seventeen hundred years ago by a man inspired; and the same question would be answered in the same manner it was then, were it put in the age we live in. But neither Achan’s rank nor

his opulence afforded him any screen against a public trial, and as public a punishment. There is not so much as one person who opens his mouth to plead for him. Matters go quite differently now. If a British Achan is half-detected, (which indeed will rarely happen) his friends, as guilty perhaps as himself, will plead strongly in his behalf. He is of noble extraction, will they say; his family was always loyal; himself hath long been a faithful servant to the crown. If it is foreseen, that, if a fair inquiry is allowed to proceed, a great proportion of the accursed thing, that is, of the public monies, will be found in his hand, they will obtain a mandate from the sovereign, to stop all further inquiry till the royal pleasure is known, which perhaps may never happen; and so the great defaulter keeps, and is allowed to keep, all that he had purloined. Thus it commonly fares with our Achans of rank and opulence: But if a poor cottager, groaning under heavy taxes, and dreadfully oppressed by a screwed rent; or if a workman, living under the dreadful expectation of new corn-bills, steals a beggarly sheep to keep in the lives of his starving family; then, then the spirit of our judges and lawyers, like the spirit of a pack of dogs when a timid hare is started, is all up at once; the law is armed with rigour against this poor thief; the edge of it is sharpened, is levelled against the neck of this friendless, this contemptible offender. But I like not to say more about the different manner in which great and poor offenders are treated; it is certainly shameful, and deeply to be lamented. I further remark, from the text before me,

7. That when a warlike nation is less successful in war, and appears to be weaker than it was formerly, there is cause to fear that the neighbouring nations may combine to invade and conquer it. Joshua is in great fear upon this head: "O Lord God, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their back before their ene-

mies; for the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land, shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth." It was from fear that the neighbouring nations should combine to ruin him, that Joshua rent his clothes, and expostulated with God: "Wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan? would to God we had been content to dwell on the other side Jordan." JORDAN, it excited as much fear, at that time, to cross the river Jordan, as it doth now to cross the Atlantic ocean. Would to God, says Joshua, we had been content to dwell on the other side of this river, this sea, this bed of water, rather than be affronted by our being defeated and chased by the few inhabitants of so contemptible a town; and, by losing our character of being a military people, expose ourselves to the danger of being cut off by a combination of the neighbouring kings. It must, indeed, seem somewhat strange, that kingdoms should combine to conquer a kingdom that is become weak already, either by the operation of natural causes, or by its own foolish projects; should they not rather assist it to emerge again from its weakness? But if that kingdom hath formerly been dreadful to those combined powers, they may be led to the conquest of it, from a sense of national honour and of national revenge. I know it is maintained by some, that both the individuals and the societies of men are mischievous to their neighbours, just in proportion as they have power to be mischievous. I would fain hope that this is not the case; and, happily for the honour of human nature, I recollect one instance to the contrary: The Athenians and Spartans were for several ages rivals in power; and yet, when the former saw the Spartans likely to be altogether ruined, they hastened to their assistance and deliverance. But Joshua had good reason to fear that the several tribes of the Canaanites would unite against him: They had heard that the Israelites were

given out to be invincible; they now saw that the inhabitants of a pitiful town, upon which, humanly speaking, they were making an unprovoked attack, were able to overcome them; was it not natural to expect that all the provinces in Canaan would, with a combined force, fall upon these invaders, and drive them back again to the other side Jordan? But, in modern times, a nation that has sunk in its warlike reputation is never in so much danger of being conquered by the neighbouring states, as when some of these states are its rivals in manufactures and in commerce. Here is a rational motive; by ruining that nation, they promote their own interest. This, I fear, is the case of Great Britain. Our warlike character is sunk or lost, and a rival kingdom may avail itself of that loss. In this American war, indeed, we have conquered several islands, one or two open American towns; and two or three provincial forts: But we have lost abundance of brave men, many millions of treasure, and, which is more than all, we have lost our character of bravery in war; and the more so, as we gave out at first, that the people we were going to fight against were altogether cowardly and contemptible. In the beginning of every campaign, we have boasted that the war would be finished that year; and yet whether we be abler to conquer America now than when we rashly began the war, is a point I do not know, nor, if I knew it, would it become me, on one supposition, to speak it out. We have often heard of new manœuvres that would produce some wonderful effects, and strokes have been threatened that would astonish all Europe; but hitherto, during the many years of this expensive, tiresome, and inglorious war, not a single gallant or splendid action hath been performed, either by our army or our fleet. Indeed, almost as little in that style hath been done by the colonists; but the wonder is less; for from that quarter nothing of that kind.

was or could well be expected. The two contending parties have looked angry, and have done little; is it to be hoped that they may yet agree?

In my juvenile years, I remember to have seen two rich but angry citizens run furiously to meet each other on the public street; an uncommon fierceness sparkled in their eyes; I trembled, for I dreaded there would be bloodshed; each of them had a switch, with which he aimed to strike, but still kept back his hand; each of them swore bloodily that he would instantly wound, and kill, and massacre his opponent, till a gentleman, a friend to both, came past, who, calling upon them to agree, told them, that a person, whom he named, was coming up, who had abundant strength, and also a violent inclination to maul each of them to purpose, or, as he expressed it, to *pay them both well*; upon which the two angry combatants retired peaceably. And is it not possible that there may be one kingdom in Europe, France for instance, which, after Britain and the Colonies shall not only have looked angrily, but also weakened one another, shall have strength and also inclination to conquer them both? God grant that the parent and the children may soon return to live in friendship and peace; and that the ambitious designs of France against Britain and the Colonies may be for ever disappointed! Evil, great worldly evil, hath overtaken us; it will be our own fault, if, by God's grace, and our sincere repentance, that evil do not turn out to our greatest, our spiritual and eternal good. I remark next,

8. That it is oftentimes advantageous to an individual, or to a society, to meet with checks in the midst of prosperity. When a nation is marred of success in its enterprises, the patriotic statesman is set a-thinking, and if the plan of war he hath hitherto pursued appear to have been erroneous, he corrects its imperfections, or, like Cæsar at Dyrrachium, he lays it altogether aside, and substitutes something better in its

place: The general improves the discipline and corrects the morals of his soldiers; the religious commander, like Joshua, exhibits to the army a proper pattern of serious devotion, calls upon the soldiers to purify themselves, and strives to instil into them a spirit of religion, of subordination and order. Had the Israelites succeeded in their first attempt against Ai, Achan might have thought there was no matter whether one regarded a divine command or not; their defeat tended to convince all the army that there are some bad and impious practices which will be attended with disappointment and disgrace. And with respect to individuals, there are very few who can bear with an uninterrupted course of prosperity; adversity calls off the mind from worldly affairs, and fixeth it on things moral, heavenly, and divine. We may fail of success in the first; in the other, which are infinitely more valuable, if it is not by our own fault, we can never fail. Temptations to vice throng around us thicker than motives to virtue; and, in the time of prosperity, we are off our guard. Happy had it been for many a person, had he by adversity been early roused to solemn thought, checked in the career of his folly, and restrained from going to an excess in riot. So evident is it, that to meet with checks, in the midst of success, may be useful to individuals and to societies. I now remark, in the last place,

9. That when a people, accustomed to be victorious, are disappointed of success against a weak enemy, they ought to be sensible of their own weakness, and humble themselves before God. Success in war is from God; but the proper means are to be used. And it need be the less wondered at, that in one war a nation hath been successful, and in another, though less formidable, and its strength nearly as before, it is miserably baffled and affronted: In the first, the plans may have been laid, and the springs of action set a-moving by a minister, whose very name made power-

ful combined kingdoms to tremble; who had sagacity to choose a Wolfe and a Hawke to execute his plans, and under whose animated administration no officer dared to protract the war, that he might the longer enjoy the emoluments and honour of command. In the other war, the nation may have been less fortunate, both with respect to plan and to execution. Be that as it may, when a martial people have failed of success against a weak enemy, it becomes them to be sensible of their own weakness, and to humble themselves before God. Joshua, by his devotion; Joshua and the elders, by their humble posture, show that they are sensible of their weakness. They come to God to receive assistance and direction from him; and God in mercy tells them how the curse was to be removed from the camp. And may it not be hoped, that, if all ranks be humbled and repent, God will in his providence discover to our most gracious king, and to his sorrowful, confounded, and penitent ministers, how this war is to be successfully pushed, or finished in such a manner as shall be most for the advantage of Britain and of the Colonies also? On this fast-day we are called upon to send up our fervent prayers to Almighty God, that a speedy and comfortable end may be put to this irksome and ruinous American war. And who is he that doth not wish and pray for so desirable an event? But all our petitions for worldly things, even for success and victory to our armies, are still to be offered up in submission to the will of God. Will we dictate to infinite wisdom? will we wrest the sceptre of government out of God's hand? All that is yet done may, by prudence and a seasonable departure from violent and coercive measures, soon issue in reconciliation and peace. But what is yet to happen in this great contest, God only knows: "His counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure." We must resignedly leave the issue of it to his infinite wisdom. We know

nothing. For, are we sure that an accession of power to the crown and ministry of Britain will tend to prolong the liberty of the subject? Are we sure that such accession will not produce an effect similar to that which the wealth of Flanders, and the gold of Mexico and Peru, had upon the liberty of Castile and Arragon, when that wealth and gold came into the hands of Charles V. and his son? Do we pray for a greater influx of riches into this country? But what good effect hath the successful trade and commerce, laid open to us by the Union, produced upon the virtue or happiness of the bulk of our people? Have not a few only been enriched, and the rest been borne down and oppressed? Have not most of these enriched few grown proud, irreligious, selfish, close-handed, and oppressive? Have not the multitude been trampled upon, been squeezed by a few rapacious masters, and rendered more miserable than ever? The conquest of America is indeed a grand object, and we are called upon to fast and to pray for it; but we pray for many things which are very hurtful to us when we get them; and we are very far from being sure that God will grant us to succeed in this great contest.

We have heard that a great statesman, who, it is said, was no ways hasty to spill the blood of our inveterate enemies on the plains of Minden, but was well enough disposed to pursue coercive and sanguinary measures against our revolted brethren in America, did not long ago declare in parliament, that he at length saw that Great Britain could not conquer America; and that if she could, that conquest would not be for the interest of Britain. It is evident, that if America is conquered at all, it must be done either by persuasion or by force, or by a mixture of both: By persuasion, by mild and equitable measures, such as might have been espoused at first, I hope a reconciliation may still take place; or, if the Americans

are first over-awed by the British armies and fleets, and then allured by gentle offers, they may be, I am sure they ought to be, reconciled to the parent-country. To conquer in either of these ways would, I think, be for the present interest of Britain. But if by conquest the noble lord meant mere force, I am not sure but we shall be obliged to accede to his opinion. Mere force may imply a complete extermination; and how this could tend to the interest of Britain, I cannot for my life perceive. The Jews, it is true, did completely exterminate the Canaanites, but they were ready themselves, to the number of two millions, to occupy that narrow vacant country. Will the Britons, to a man, emigrate to America, and leave this fair island a desert? If we extirpate the Americans, will not so fine a country be again inhabited? and may not God in his providence have permitted the many imprudent steps that have been taken, for many years past, that he might exhibit and hold up that great continent to the view of all the world, and to aggrandise a rising empire, which the schemes of short-sighted men pretend to crush and annihilate? Will we people that wide country from Asia, and from Europe, that is, from Russia and from Germany, or other countries where the poor inhabitants are oppressed? Are we sure that these supposed new inhabitants of America will not imbibe the natural principles of liberty and independence, on account of which principles we now fight against the present inhabitants? Will we prevent this by a standing army? (if we have wealth to keep a great army there); it is evident, that, with an army over their heads, a colony will never thrive, or be of any use to the parent-country; it will quickly decline, and come to nothing, just as a blossom is blasted by a keen frost, or nipped in the bud by a withering north wind. But why do I try to speculate in this manner? God hath it in his power to change the minds of Britons and

Americans from the love of war, and to cement them in the bands of friendship, though commonly this is done slowly, by rational motives, and by a long course of mutual good usage.

The contest about America is momentous : Britain aims to hold in due and perpetual subjection the numerous and fast-multiplying inhabitants of a distant and extensive continent, twenty times larger than her own European territories. The object in view is certainly great ; perhaps there never was an aim equal to it in the history of mankind ; and yet, from too much keenness to succeed in this aim, it is possible we may not only weaken, but even ruin our native country ; and this, I think, may, in some degree, be occasioned by these amazing levies that are now carried on, by which our manufactures, and agriculture itself, must greatly suffer. We have by far too few working people already ; of this the king's servants in Scotland are so well apprized, that, not seven years ago, one of them applied to the commissioners of the customs, insisting that they would give orders to the custom-house officers to stop all emigration. He even publicly declared, that if any of the poor farmers left their houses, and should travel towards the port, to embark for America, he would array the fencible men of the county, and drive them back to their dreary abodes. A quite different system hath of late, and all at once, been greedily embraced ; and, in this northern part of the island, it is keenly pursued ; pursued at an expence that is enormous, and almost incredible ; nobles, gentlemen, cities, boroughs, towns, and villages, are all a-stir, all busy at levying numerous double regiments to be sent to America. Never was one-fiftieth part of such keenness shown against the French, in any of the attempts they made to conquer us, and bring us under popery and arbitrary power. There may be wisdom in the keen pushing of these levies, but it is not easy for an ordinary un-

derstanding to discover it. It brings on depopulation at once.

I spoke of former attempts of France against Britain. It is just now strongly reported, that a new war is soon to be raised against us by that powerful kingdom. Is it not proper, that Britain and America should both choose to be just as they were during the last French war, when, being united in affection and in arms, they were a match, and more than a match, to the united powers of France and Spain? Ought not the parent-country and the Colonies to enter into a strict and friendly union of any kind whatsoever, rather than that either or both should lie at the mercy, or be brought under the dominion of that powerful and perfidious people? Would not the Americans flourish more and more, being enriched by the British trade, and powerfully protected by the British navy? And should they not pass over a few causes, perhaps just causes, of complaint, and flee to defend a parent, against whom a violent, and perhaps mortal blow is aimed by a determined enemy? And would it not be noble in Britons, to be even the first to depart from strife, and enter again into friendship with these Colonies, against whom they now prepare to fight with greater numbers than ever? God knows with what success.

But I am at the end of the discourse. Let us all, agreeably to the pious design of this day, repent of our sins, and pray to God, that he may save the British empire, and all its parts, from ruin. "Spare, O Lord, thy people; give not thine inheritance to reproach."—"Let us send up our prayers and supplications to the Divine Majesty, for averting those heavy judgments which our manifold sins and provocations have most justly deserved." Let us pray, that God may inspire our king and his counsellors with that wisdom which is from above; that he may give success to the humane means used, or to be used, by

which this tedious war may be brought to an end, without any further shedding of Christian and kindred blood; that the Americans may throw aside the weapons of hostility, and, embracing fair and equitable offers of liberty and peace, be cemented into a complete and lasting friendship with Great Britain; then shall all “the king’s loyal subjects in the American provinces be delivered from violence, injustice, and arbitrary power;” then we will be the less alarmed by any sudden fear, and, by God’s help, be able to repel the unprovoked invasion of our old enemies, if it cometh.

My friends, it is not from a vague report that we speak, but by intelligence openly communicated to the House of Commons, by some members of that House: Hereby we have been informed, that this kingdom is soon to be invaded by France, or obliged to defend itself against a French war. The strength of our fleet and of our army is now abroad, occupied in the war against the American colonies. As subjects of this anciently free state, must we not wish and pray that the kingdom of Great Britain may be for ever safe and free, defended, as it hath hitherto been, by the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength? But, in our private and personal capacity, as rational and accountable creatures, we are to strive, that, by faith and holiness, we may be members of God’s kingdom, his kingdom of grace, and his kingdom of glory. Every man wishes for the prosperity and temporal greatness of his country; but what consolation will the greatest degree of such prosperity afford to any man, at the awful hour of death, if he be an ungodly, a debauched, a hard-hearted, and fraudulent person? The kingdoms of this world strive, alas! to conquer each other. Let every one of us strive to conquer himself, his appetites, his passions, his sinful inclinations: He that overcometh himself, is “better than the mighty,” and “he that ruleth his

spirit, is better than he who taketh a city." If, by faith in Christ, we have got this victory over ourselves, we will, when the nation is in the tumult of a foreign war, enjoy at home serenity and peace, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding; a peace of which we cannot be bereaved, even whilst we eagerly desire to enjoy a national peace also.

My brethren, unless it be by repentance and by prayer, (and the prayer of the righteous availeth much) you can do little to bring this war to an end; but you have the consolation to think, that you did nothing to give it a beginning; none of you were of a revolting spirit; none of you did, from love of domination, boast of the bravery of the British, and the cowardice of the Americans; you gave no fiery counsels to the ministry, nor offered any violent, but ensnaring, addresses to the throne, promising to spend your lives and fortunes in this war: Fatal steps, fallacious promises! by which Britain and America were set together by the ears, and drawn into that flame in which they have burned for so long a time; you have not taken of the "accursed thing," nor pilfered any of the public revenue, nor taken any bribe to blind your eyes; you did not plunder the houses, or lift and drive away the cattle of the innocent; you did not, on the theatre of action, embroil affairs still more than they were; nor did you, by your timidity or folly, disgrace your country: You can, with a safe conscience, say, what some statesmen and soldiers dare not say, "Whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe? Here I am, witness against me, and I will restore it you." You are innocent of this ill-projected and ill-conducted war; your conscience doth not challenge you for the heavy sums that have been uselessly spent; the blood of many thousands that hath been shed; the wretchedness of many women who

have been left widows, and of many children, whose fathers have been mangled, or drowned, or starved, or slain with the sword.—To form a scheme by which one innocent man is to be killed, is an atrocious crime; to form precipitantly, and from base passions, and narrow views, a scheme by which many thousands will be pushed into eternity, must be a dead weight upon the consciences of those who formed it, when they awake, and begin to be sensible of their guilt; and if they are at all sensible of what they have done, it is a wonder they are not forced, from a sense of shame, to hide their heads from the public view: Their case is certainly deplorable, till they repent, and confess each of them, like Achan: “Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel; and thus and thus have I done;” for there is a judgment to come, when those who have drenched the nations in blood, who have robbed the fatherless, and carried off the spoils of the widow, shall stand trembling before the tribunal of Christ, condemning themselves, and anticipating the sentence that is to be past against them.—You, my friends, when you shall see the sign of the Son of Man coming in the clouds with power and great glory, lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh: Your hearts are purified by faith; you have not robbed, nor stolen, nor oppressed; nay, you have relieved the poor, when the rich, who should have done so, shut their eyes at sight of woe, and passed by on the other side. Though outward things should not issue according to your expectation and wish, you have learned resignation to the will of God, because you know the Judge of all the earth will do right. In one word, though the worst should happen, if, whilst our coast is but poorly defended, because great part of our army and fleets are employed in another war, an army of French papists should make good their landing on this kingdom, probably a popish pretender along with them, you,

who would have been distressed to take the field against your poor American brethren, will, if called upon, appear with courage, and in manly armour, against the enemies of the ancient liberty and religion of Britain. What though some of you should fall in so glorious a cause! your peace with God is, I hope, already made; your memory will be renowned to latest posterity, along with these other saints of God, who "waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens—were slain with the edge of the sword, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Come, you will say, come, let us play the man for our people, and the cities of our God, and the Lord do what seemeth him good." May God bless, &c.

Mr Alexander B...
13
Peace well known
No matter
Signe
He
no other person here present
The strongest sign of liberty
they are not all necessary

SERMON V.

FROM WHENCE COME WARS?

Preached in the Church of Govan, on the Public Fast, 1779.

From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

— JAMES iv. 1. 2. 3.

WAR is so hideous and detestable, that when any serious person sees or hears of its existence and its operations, he finds it natural to inquire into its origin, and to put to himself, and to the contending parties, if he hath access to them, such a question as you have in the text, From whence come wars?—From whence come wars and fightings among you? And, upon a slight inquiry, he is satisfied, that so foul and ruinous a thing must be derived from some very polluted source: “Come they not,”—come not wars hence, even from your lusts that war in your members?

There are several sorts of contention, each of which may be called a war. If a man is vicious, or but half virtuous, there is often a war within his bosom; his appetites and unruly desires strive against his reason. If one who hath not yet learned virtue, will, in an hour of thoughtfulness, look to what is transacting within him, he may perceive tumult, fighting, confusion; one insatiable lust is sometimes engaged against another; his avarice, for instance, against his

pride; at times each of them fights against conscience, that deputy of God in the soul, and too often with a fatal success: He may be sensible of their keenness, their onset, and the victory they obtain on that interior field; he may even feel the wounds they have given, and observe the scars that remain. "Fleshly lusts war against the soul."

In private life, after society hath taken place, when the more powerful seizes on the property, assaults the person, or invades the life of his weaker neighbour, then there is a broil, a contention, a private war in the neighbourhood; and then a foundation is laid for an action at law: This too is a sort of war, and, like other wars, it exhausts, it gives pain, and the issue of it is uncertain. The poor injured person feels great pain, whilst he is in anxiety about a decision, on which perhaps his very subsistence doth depend. And be he ever so grievously and palpably injured, he cannot be sure of meeting with redress, especially if he is very poor or in very low life. Society is corrupted, and courts of justice are corrupted in proportion. The weak is borne down and disappointed, or, if in the issue he gains his cause, yet, by the great expence and protracting of the cause, perhaps for many years, he would not have been half so great a loser had he never moved for any redress at all.

Great and wonderful is the influence of the opulent upon their neighbours in common life; as great is their influence upon the judges in our law-courts. Let me therefore by the way hint at an important advice, and I sincerely wish that there may be few or none of you who shall ever have any need of it. Thou hast been injured—thy friends are sensible that the injury is glaring and deep—thou art provoked—thy spirits are high—thy hopes are sanguine—thou thinkest it a sure point that thou wilt easily obtain legal redress—fallacious hope! Alas! thou art too poor to bear the expence of a process at law; thou art too

little known; thou hast no member of the court to push forward thy cause. If thou contendest with some great person, thou mayst lay thy account beforehand that respect will be shown to the man with the gold ring and the gay clothing, the man who hath riches, who hath liberality of soul to furnish out a copious and splendid entertainment to the judges: Believe me, and for once follow my advice; adventure not on a process which will certainly be expensive, which in all probability will be tedious, and however clear thou mayst think it, its issue is extremely doubtful: Thou wilt be borne down and disappointed; or, suppose that by some odd and favourable chance thou shouldst succeed, yet it is fifty to one that, upon the whole, thou wilt be a loser. Check that lust which stimulates thee to take the field in this sort of war; leave off the contention before it be meddled with; agree with thine adversary by the way, rather than embark in a contention that will be expensive and tedious, and the issue of it precarious; soothe thine adversary, accept of his terms, or submit the difference to the first stranger thou meetest with; if he be a man of sense and common honesty, the less knowledge he hath of our law, his decision will probably be the more consistent with material justice. A process at law, in most of our courts, is like trying one's fortune at a state-lottery; a wise man who hath made one trial will hardly ever venture to make a second.

I presume the text would justify me, though, in this discourse, I should confine myself to that interior war, that torture which an unrenewed man feels, which, even when his lusts are kept from bursting out in flagrant acts of intemperance, injustice, or violence, yet they burn within him as red coals covered up with ashes; or, should I speak only of that other war, going to law, which I have just now mentioned. But there is another dreadful contention, which is

more properly, and also more commonly called war, namely, public solemn war, that is, either when two independent states arm themselves for mutual destruction; or civil war, that is, when two different parts of the same empire are unfortunately at variance, and go to war with each other. It is in reference to one or other, or both of these last mentioned wars, that I design this discourse; and this, I think, is to act with propriety on a day when we are assembled, by lawful authority, to confess our sins, to implore the pardon of them, and to pray that God would give success in that war wherein we have already been long engaged, and preserve us against the violent hostilities of France, and the unprovoked attacks of that strong and perfidious power.

From the text, it is manifest that there were wars among those to whom St. James addresses this epistle; and of these wars their lusts were indisputably the cause. That there are wars among Christians now, is a mournful fact, of which we need not take long time to investigate the cause: Lusts produced wars formerly, and the same, or similar effects, do now also spring from the same or from similar causes. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even from your lusts that war in your members?"

In this discourse I intend to do the following things:

1. I will mention some of these lusts from which wars and fightings take their rise.

2. I will next show a little more particularly, why it is that lust, or the gratification of lust, is the origin and cause of war.

3. I will take some notice of the misery of those nations that are engaged in war.

4. I will next show, which seems to be intimated in the text, that it is strange that Christians, who have so much reason to live in peace, should wage war against each other.

5. I will then mention some rules and limitations, which have been agreed upon to mitigate the ills of war.—And, in the last place,

6. I will mention, and mostly from the text, a few reasons, why a people who have some religion, or at least appear to be serious, may continue long involved in distress, and even in the calamities of war itself.

I intend to speak plainly, and to be short on each of these particulars, which, as I apprehend, are all founded in the text.

1. I will mention some of these lusts from which wars and fightings take their rise.—And the first I mention is the lust of carnal pleasure. This, if I mistake not, is strictly and properly called lust in the style of scripture, and in common conversation. This particular lust is as dangerous as it is impetuous, if it be not restrained and directed by reason, and by laws human and divine. And it appears evidently from scripture, from the most ancient history, and even from fable, that this lust hath been the unhappy cause of bloodshed, of massacres, and of tedious wars.—Another lust I mention, which hath been the cause of wars, is the violent desire of being rich. This lust, as it occasions broils and contentions in private life, so, in like manner, it kindles up the flames of war among the princes of this world. Many of them think, and some of them have been heard to say, “Why should such a prince enjoy a greater revenue than I have? The territories from which he draws the most of it lies contiguous to my dominions; a part of it belonged to one of my predecessors: The foreign commerce which he appropriates to his subjects, and which enables them to pay him such immense customs and taxes, ought, in natural justice, to be laid open to my subjects also. Let us arm, and do ourselves justice by a just and necessary war.” Nay, it hath happened in our own times, that three princes in Europe did, from avarice, agree to seize upon a

great part of a neighbouring kingdom, which, by the efforts or the terror of their armies, they divided among themselves.—A third lust, from which wars arise, is ambition or pride. This lust is, I believe, in the estimation of the world, accounted less mean and contemptible than the base pursuit of riches, or the wild desire of sensual pleasure, but it is certainly as pernicious. If we attentively examine the history of past times, we will see that princes have often raised war from the lust of worldly glory, from an unbridled desire to enlarge their dominions, and to see the neighbouring kings brought into subjection, and bowing down before them; or, from a lust of glory as criminal, namely, to enslave their own subjects, so that they shall not dare to think of resisting their arbitrary will, or even to mutter or complain of the grievous oppression which they suffer. These lusts, which I have so briefly mentioned, are the same which St. John enumerates, after advising us not to love the world. “Love not,” he says, “the world, neither the things that are in the world; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world.” Lust, in general, is the cause of war. To some one or other of the disorderly appetites I have named, the rise of every war may be traced. I will however mention, as a particular cause of war, the passion of revenge, which is, you know, the child of pride. This lust, I doubt not, hath sometimes been the cause of wars and fightings. A nation, from its ill success in war, or from dread of being swallowed up or overwhelmed by some formidable neighbour, hath been perhaps forced to submit to terms which it thinks unreasonable and unjust. It keeps itself quiet for perhaps a long time: Like a bull in the forest, it collects all its strength, and from this thirst of revenge, renews the war, with a view to wipe off the affront it had received, and regain the

advantage it had lost.—I may add, that sometimes wicked ministers of state engage their master in a war merely to screen themselves from condign punishment; to divert or stifle the clamour of an injured people against their covetous and bungling administration, they wilfully involve the nation in all the miseries of war: This, this, alas! hath often been done. I might perhaps mention many other particular causes from which wars and fightings come; some of them too shameful to be named: But every war is derived, as I have said, from some of the general sources already spoken of. “From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even from your lusts that war in your members?”—Come they not from your criminal lust after sensual pleasure, or from a greedy desire of riches, of possessing yourselves of that which is the property of your neighbour? or from an ambitious desire to appear in splendour, to be admired for the extent and value of your possessions, to have great power, and to see those who are now your equals reduced to the necessity of bowing and cringing before you?—Or do not wars and fightings among you arise from a restless implacable temper, from a spirit of revenge, from an abiding resentment of some perhaps real, perhaps very slight or imaginary affront or injury which you fancy you have sustained?—or from the artifices of some mean-spirited and covetous minister, who, when the cry of an impoverished and abused people grows loud against him for his blundering and inglorious administration, adds to all his other crimes that of involving the nation in lasting misery, that he may keep his lucrative place, and stave off for a while that disgrace and punishment which he richly deserves. I will next show a little more particularly,

2. How and why it is, that lusts, or the gratification of lusts, is the origin and cause of war.—And this is the case, because it commonly happens, that,

by the illiēt gratification of luſts, ſome of the ſacred rights of mankind are violated ; then the injured perſon acquires a right to compel the injurious to make him reparation. When the injurer refuſes to do this, and by force maintains and defends the injuſtice he hath done, and the injured alſo ſtrives, with all his might, that juſtice may be done him, then it is manifeſt that wars and fightings muſt ariſe. This is the caſe between the individuals of mankind in a ſtate of natural liberty, and between kingdoms after political ſociety hath been conſtituted.

There are indeed certain claims, called imperfect rights, which, though they be violated, yet the injured party cannot by any law compel the fulfilment of them by force. If I, from compaſſion, aſſiſt a poor man, even by conſiderable ſums of money, to emerge out of his diſtreſſed condition into opulence and eaſe, I have no right to force him to reſtore to me what I had freely and voluntarily beſtowed to relieve him ; let him afterwards become fifty times richer than ever I was, and let me be reduced to ever ſo poor circumſtances, I have no title to make any ſuch demand upon him, no title to commence any action at law upon that head. It is indeed highly fit and equitable that ſuch reſtitution ſhould be made ; and it is manifeſt, that in aſſiſting and relieving the miſerable conſiſts the nobleſt exerciſe of virtue ; and in making cheerful and proper returns for ſuch beneficence conſiſts the virtue of gratitude. The man who violates theſe imperfect rights is himſelf a very bad man ; he is relieved by the generoſity of others, but he hath not the heart to make any return ; his example tends to harden the heart of the opulent, and cauſe them ſhut their ear againſt the cries of the miſerable. God and conſcience require that ſuitable returns ſhould be made for good offices that have been done ; but theſe returns cannot be forced ; and if they ſhould be forced, they would ceaſe to be virtue.

But it is quite otherwise with respect to the rights which are called perfect; the right which a man hath to his property, to his life, to defend the life of a parent, to protect his innocent family, to defend the honour of a sister, of a daughter, or a wife. Whensoever any one offers to injure him in any of these particulars, he hath right to repel the injury by force; and if the injury be already done, he hath right to compel the injurious party to make complete reparation, or to make him suffer a condign punishment for his crime.

All that I have said concerning the behaviour of individuals to one another, is equally true when applied to kingdoms. If a kingdom, or the sovereign of a kingdom, sees a neighbouring kingdom, or an infant-state, in danger of being unjustly crushed and overwhelmed by a formidable power, and generously, and even at great expence, interposeth to defend and protect that weak or infant-state; and by his noble efforts not only defends it, but, in fact, exalts it to opulence and grandeur, he doth not, however, acquire any right to demand or exact by force any return, any pay or tax for this voluntary kindness.

But when any king or state seizes on the property of another state, the injured, as I have said, have an undisputed right to demand reparation, and to effectuate it by open force. Without this right, and the proper exercise of it, human society could not subsist: And it is from the violation of some sacred and perfect right that every just and lawful war doth arise. One would therefore be inclined to think, that only one of the parties at war can be justly charged with being the author of the war, namely, he who committed the first injury: He is the aggressor; he gratified his criminal desires, he violated the sacred rights of others; from whence then come the subsequent wars and fightings but from him? He hath first done wrong, and next he maintains and defends by force

what he hath done. But quarrels would not last long if the wrong were only on one side; and in fact it often happens, that soon after the war begins, it becomes difficult to say which of the belligerent parties is the most injurious, and deserves the greatest blame; but it for ever happens, that in the course and progress of the war both the parties are wretched and miserable. I will therefore in the next place,

3. Take some notice of the misery of those nations which are engaged in war.—In war, misery is the lot of the weakest party, and the strongest is commonly miserable also. The weaker party, or the people whose country hath become the theatre of the war, are surely miserable: In their most fertile territories the armies of the enemy are encamped; the officers are lodged in their best towns; the sick, the aged, are dragged from their beds; the rich are driven from their houses to make way for the ease of the rapacious hostile soldiers; the corn which the harmless industrious peasant had laid up to feed his children, the clothes he had got to cover them, are greedily seized upon; his sheep and cattle are driven from the pastures, the keepers who attempted to convey them quietly to a hiding-place, are called thieves, and massacred, and left dead upon the spot; one province is over-run, one city is conquered after another—the inhabitants are cooped up in narrow bounds—famine pursues them—the furious enemy overtakes them—a siege is formed—a battle is struck—nothing is to be seen but sights of woe.—“If I go forth into the field, then behold the slain with the sword; if I enter into the city, then behold them that are sick with famine.” Many thousands are killed on each side—“dying groans are heard—limbs are seen flying in the air—there is smoke, noise, confusion;—trampling to death under the horses feet—flight, pursuit, victory—fields strewed with carcases, left for food to dogs, and wolves, and birds of prey—plun-

dering, stripping, ravishing, burning, and destroying.”—Methinks I see the widow running, staggering on the slippery, bloody field, amidst the mangled corpses of the dead and dying, and, struck with the sight of her expiring husband, she stops, she grasps him in her arms; a sight, a hold, which renders her more wretched than if the pangs of death itself had taken hold of her: She is bereaved, she is left desolate, she sees that by the loss of the parent the children are helpless.—This is misery—and yet, perhaps, cruelty proceeds so far, that a war of distress and desolation is pursued;—houses, villages, cities, are burnt to the ground—corn, large granaries of corn, if it cannot be taken away, is destroyed by fire—to the men no quarter is given, and even women and children are starved, or barbarously put to death.—Thus it is that, in war the weaker side is miserable; and it commonly happens, that in the course of the war, or at least in the issue of it, the stronger is miserable also; they are miserable and in pain by every disappointment, if the vigour of the other party is at times visibly renewed; or if there be circumstances which seem to make it probable that the half-vanquished shall entirely elude the vengeance of those who prematurely boasted of victory. And sometimes courage and a manly fury returns into the souls of those who were damped, who were near to despair, and almost overcome;—they are emboldened, because they fight in the cause of their country, they fight in defence of liberty—they determine that they shall oblige the conqueror to purchase victory at a costly rate—or, perhaps, like the Dutch, when unjustly invaded by the combined fleets and armies of France and England, they resolve to emigrate to a distant land—or, like those on an extensive continent, who, having failed of success, elude the rage of the conquerors, and disappoint their aim, by leaving their possessions, and going far backwards to form new set-

lements in the desert—or, in an unjustifiable and highly criminal desperation, they, like the citizens of Saguntum, burn their own houses over their heads. And sometimes also it happens, that, by a vigorous, a desperate and successful courage, they are able to chase out of the country that very army which for a long time was like to conquer them. Thus in war the weaker side are miserable, and the stronger are so also. The prince, the leaders, may by luxury be hardened against the sense of pain; but the people, the bulk of the people, are wretched. They are overburdened with taxes—the country is depopulated—the tillers of the land, and the useful artificers, are comprehended, are pressed, are dragged from their necessary and innocent occupations, and forced to carry on the war whether they think it righteous or sinful. The wife, the little child, runs often to the door and looks for the husband, the parent, whom, alas! they shall never see again. Here too the soldiers are just as miserable as those of the weaker party;—their toil is as severe—their beds are as hard—their sleep as precarious—and their food as coarse and as scanty. If they retain any sense of humanity, they must be shocked at those acts of cruelty which they are hounded out to commit, and if they have been the instruments of committing them, they must be stung with remorse. The kingdom, in striving to be victorious at an enormous expence, which it can ill bear, reduces itself to poverty and ruin; and if at length it succeeds, those in the upper rank may for a while enjoy a brutal and inglorious ease, whilst they wallow in luxury and debauchery, devouring that which by the fortune of the war hath fallen into their fangs; but when that is devoured, they commonly, like hungry dogs, fall to work again, and worry, and bite, and devour one another. In short, if a state hath been victorious, and hath conquered an extensive territory, it is but hastening the faster to its own

downfall: Either the subjects, great and small, will become absolute slaves under a despotic master, or else the empire, being too extensive, consisting of too many provinces, must crumble again into parts; parts, amongst which all the horrible injustice, and all the horrible ills of war, are like to be acted over again, and suffered anew. I will next show,

4. What seems to be intimated in the text, that it is strange that Christians, who have so much reason to live in peace, should wage war against each other. "From whence come wars and fightings among you?" Among you who are the disciples of Christ, the disciples of the Prince of peace.

And most certainly, if people in every condition of life would imbibe the spirit of the gospel, there would be few or no broils and contentions in private life, few or no actions at law, because there would be no occasion given for any such contention. And if great men, the princes of this world, and their ministers, learned and practised the doctrine of Christ, there would be no wars between nation and nation.

The first lesson which Christ prescribes to be learned in his school, and learned by every one of his followers, is this, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself." If this great lesson is learned, and put in practice—if the lusts, the criminal desires, and impetuous appetites, which I have mentioned, are mortified, no injury will be done, and of course there will not be any cause of war: Then men would "beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning hooks—nation would not lift up the sword against nation, neither would they learn war any more—God's people would dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places:" Then the prophecy concerning the peaceful state of things, in the days of the Messiah, would be literally fulfilled; the fierce and the mild, "the wolf and the lamb would feed together, the

leopard would lie down with the kid; the lion would eat straw like the bullock; none of them would hurt nor destroy."

In the holy scriptures, many strong reasons are suggested to prevail on men to repress every angry passion, to persuade them to do justly, to cultivate the kind affections, and cherish the spirit of benevolence and friendship. All men are formed and upheld by the same God; he is their common father; "he hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth;" they are brethren—whensoever any one is tempted, by whatever lust or passion, to injure another, he should think he hears the man of God crying in his ears, "Why smitest thou thy fellow? Sirs, ye are brethren, why do ye harm one to another?"

If princes, before they commit any atrocious and striking act of public injustice; if lawgivers, before they rashly enact any law which seems to establish dreadful slavery and unlimited oppression, would take time to consider what alarm, what discontent, what rage and fury may be excited by such hasty and violent measures; what wars and fightings may happen in consequence of them, what battles may be fought, what blood may be shed; cities razed, and flourishing kingdoms laid desolate; would not a sense of justice operate on their minds? would not compassion for the many thousands or millions whom they are going to throw into unmerited distress, check them in their furious career, and stop them from the execution of their criminal purposes? Would not fear of kindling the flames of war in their own country, and of seeing their own innocent subjects in distress and misery, produce the same salutary effect?

But, alas! princes and great men, who in their palaces live in luxury and at ease, are but little sensible of the misery which accompanies war; nay, even those in common life are not half enough apprized

of its horror: For as soon as we are capable to attend to any thing, we hear, we read of war and the barbarous arts of destruction; with these arts we become familiar by degrees; we seldom examine how horrible they are, because what we know of them we learn at an age when the mind receives ideas implicitly, admires any thing that appears great, and also retains the impressions that are early made upon it. Hence it is, that if a person in low life, to gratify his avarice, way-lays and murders another, we shudder at such cruelty; but if a statesman, to gratify his pride, his ambition, or lust of domination, forms a plan, in the executing of which a million of innocent people shall by the sword be hurried into eternity, we applaud the daring greatness of his spirit: The first is, with great justice, condemned to an infamous death, and dragged to a gibbet; the last, though infinitely more criminal, is gazed upon by a slavish and stupid people, and perhaps gets himself possessed of half the riches of a kingdom.

Eternal glory, of which the gospel gives us the view and the hope—the fallacious nature of sensual pleasure—the small accession of delight that springs from opulence or large possessions—the vanity of ambition or worldly glory, might, if thought upon, restrain Christians from thoughts of injustice, and thereby cut off all necessity of private fightings, and of public wars. Let me add, that it is very seldom that a prince or a kingdom gains any thing at all, either money or territory, even by a successful war. “They lust and have not, they kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain.” On either side, let the war be ever so keenly entered into, let the principal subjects be all a-flir, and grasping at the executive power from the sovereign’s hands; let them levy many regiments at an enormous expence; let it be supposed that the war hath cost the lives of millions of brave men, and millions also of treasure; and that in the dreary course

of many tedious campaigns, many of the enemies being killed, and their treasure also exhausted, the war, on one side, is in so far crowned with success. Let it be further supposed, that each of the parties hath conquered, from its opposite, some town, or some barren island, or equally barren territory; yet, in the conclusion, it commonly happens that all things are agreed to be restored and settled on the same footing they were when the war began. Look at the treaties of peace that have been made in Europe for above a hundred years past, and you will find that this, or something nearly like this, is a preliminary article in the treaty, “The high belligerent or contracting parties agree, that whatever any of them has conquered from the other, in the course of the war, shall be faithfully restored, and that every thing shall remain for ever in that same state in which it was when the war broke out.” Ridiculous! Why then did the war break out at all? What is now become of the elevated hopes, the loud boasting, and the proud expectations of thorough success? The mountain was in travail, was in hard labour, was uttering mighty groans, and not so much as one contemptible reptile is produced. Why then, after so many instances of successful war, why venture to repeat the dangerous trial? This view of war is so evidently ridiculous, that, many years ago, I have heard some able and enlightened people maintain, that the time would soon come when the princes of Europe and their ministers, however weak and ignorant they may be supposed to be, (and weak and ignorant, it is said, many of them are, to a very amazing degree) will so clearly perceive their interest, that they will finish all their differences by arbitration, or some other quiet means, without any longer entering into war;—a state of things which I fear is rather to be wished than to be hoped for. Hitherto it would seem that the rulers of kingdoms do often kindle up the flames of war

without knowing why, without having any special reason to do so. A long and bloody war was not long ago carried on between Great Britain and France, and, upon a retrospective view of it, politicians and historians are at a loss to tell what was the cause of it. Aukward children, when they meet on the street or in the field, they perhaps for a little look angrily at one another—then one of them reaches his neighbour a blow, which is soon returned—each of the two is joined by his friends—the clamour rises on the green—hats fly off—the hair is pulled—faces are scratched—heads perhaps are broken, and coats and shirts are torn;—in a while they grow weary of giving and receiving blows, and, leaving off the fray, they agree to live in peace. Kings and ministers of state are just big grown up children; they are like the children I speak of, with this particular and unhappy difference, that, instead of fighting out the needless quarrels they have raised, betaking themselves to places of shelter, they hound out their innocent subjects to battle, and involve the nation they misgovern in bloodshed and expence, and perhaps, by levies and by heavy taxes, first weaken it, and then gradually reduce it to absolute poverty, to utter ruin and contempt. The next thing I proposed was,

5. To mention some of those rules which have been agreed upon to mitigate some of the ills of war. “From whence come wars and fightings among you?” Among you, Christians. If you cannot prevent war altogether, is it not in your power to soften its rigour and ferocity, at least in some degree?

Whensoever a war, even a lawful war, hath commenced, there are many unjust and cruel things done; done from immemorial practice, some of which, perhaps, cannot be avoided. In war, it is usual to consider the prince and his subjects as making only one person, and of course to conclude, that whatever injury the prince hath done, the subjects may be justly

punished for it; and, from this fiction, the injured fall upon the subjects of the injurious prince by sea and land, and either kill them, or strip them of all they have. This is at present, and hath long been, for aught I know, the universal practice; and yet it appears to be unjust. Have we not been struck with a sense of this injustice, on seeing French merchants carried prisoners along our streets, who, having acquired a fortune in the Indies, and knowing nothing of any hostility between France and England, were returning peaceably home, and were, on the open seas, fallen upon by our privateers, and robbed of every farthing they had got? And I believe the humane among the French are struck in the same manner, when they see carried into their prisons any British merchants who had been captured and robbed by the privateers of France. It is just that the injurer, and not the innocent, should suffer. Would it not be right, and agreeable to what nature dictates, that kings or their ministers should fight it out, and, in their own persons, finish the war which they have provoked? Should they not feel and speak the noble sentiments and language of King David, when, for a particular offence of his, a great plague was to come upon his innocent subjects: Here, I think, David expresses a strong and a proper sense of justice; here the generosity of his soul appears as illustrious as it doth in any other prayer, or psalm, or speech, or in any action of his life. David said unto God, "Is it not I, even I it is that have sinned, and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be on me, and on my father's house, but not on thy people that they should be plagued." So delicate a sense of justice is surely rare.

But I am to speak of the rules, the restrictions, which, in all ages, have been agreed upon to moderate the fury of parties at war, and which Christians

ought surely to observe : For even that nation, which, by its injustice, hath excited against itself a just war, doth still retain rights which it would be high injustice to violate.

In war, the aim of the injured nation ought to be no more but to compel the injurious to agree to reasonable terms of peace ; that is, to make due reparation, and give assurance that it will not, as before, violate the laws of justice. This is the lawful aim in war, and it ought to be prosecuted with as little bloodshed, as little destruction, as possible. Nothing should be done that tends merely to exasperate, to make the breach wider, and to lengthen out the contest ; nothing should be done but that which hath some tendency to bring the war to an end. IncurSIONS into the interior parts of the enemies country, burning villages, driving cattle, when not absolutely necessary to subsist the army, robbing and killing the unarmed and defenceless peasants, in their separate dwellings and plantations—is unjust and cruel ; it is an irritating, a paltry, and pilfering way of making war.

The fortune of the war may alter, and a cutting remembrance of such needless and unavailing acts of barbarity may provoke a dreadful retaliation and revenge. “ Gideon said to Zeba and Zalmunna, the two princes of Midian, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor ? and they answered, As thou art, so were they ; each one resembled the children of a king. And he said, They were my brethren ; as the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you.—And Gideon arose and slew them.”

To make war in the way I have mentioned is condemned by the law of nations. And all nations have, I think, agreed, that the person of an ambassador is not to be violated,—nor hostages slain, unless it be for some crime of their own after they had become

hostages—nor soldiers fired upon, after they have thrown down their arms, and begged for quarter—nor the wounded slaughtered upon the field—nor prisoners killed or barbarously used—nor the sword drawn against old men or children—nor women ravished or killed. These, and other rules and restrictions, have been agreed to by all civilized nations, and they tend to mitigate the horror of war to a very considerable degree. It hath been maintained, that, from the genius and gentle spirit of Christianity, war is now made with more mildness than it was in ancient times. Perhaps in most Christian countries it is generally so, and I am sorry that this mildness of modern manners in war is not universal. I think of Mexico and Peru, where, by professed Christians, many millions of harmless people were savagely butchered above two hundred years ago. Many lesser instances of the same kind might be mentioned; but I would fain think, that the mournful narrative, that, within these few years, four or five millions of innocent people in Indostan were starved and destroyed by the rigour and rapacity of the English, is not sufficiently authenticated. It must, however, be confessed, that the manner in which war is carried on now is very different from that of the ancients; the ancients, instead of killing those they conquered, did often carry the conquered along with them into their own country. When David was absent from Ziklag, the Amalekites invaded the country, invaded Ziklag, and smote it, and burnt it with fire, and took the women captives that were therein: “They slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way.” When the Israelites conspired against the king of Assyria, and refused to pay him tribute, “the king of Assyria,” after a siege of three years, “took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and in Habor, by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.”

And when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah, he carried the inhabitants captive to Babylon, having, so far as I remember, slain but a few.

In one word, it is naturally just to make war by open violence, as far as it is necessary to obtain our right, or to distress the enemy, so as he shall consent to just terms; but such violence and cruelty as is not naturally subservient to this purpose, or without which we could obtain our right as effectually, and at no greater expence to ourselves, is unjust, and detestable in the sight of God and man. In order to end so horrible a thing as war, I think I may say further, that if, in the course of the war, the leaders of the one contending party find that their armies are weaker, and their resources fewer, than those of the other, they ought to controul their pride, and submit, with as good a grace as possible, to the stronger: This is surely a less evil than that they should, by their obstinacy, bring extermination upon their country. Civil liberty is precious, but life is still more so. Why will ye die? says the prophet Jeremiah to the king of Judah—"Why will ye die, thou and thy people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the Lord hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon?" And whatever some of the haughty Romans have boasted to the contrary, I think it manifest, that Cato and Scipio ought to have submitted to Cæsar, rather than, as they did, put a violent end to their lives. For that unnatural and unjustifiable step they are censured by the more judicious of even the heathen writers. It is every man's duty to preserve his life, though, by the vicissitudes of the world, he may see himself obliged to become the subject or the servant of a new master. Self-preservation is his indispensable duty; he owes it to God, to his country, and to himself; and God may, in his good time, restore him to liberty.

And here I cannot but regret, that, in this unhap-

py contest between Great Britain and its Colonies, some persons have been invidiously misrepresented as entertaining opinions too favourable to the cause of the Americans. In a contest of this sort, it is impossible but that the opinions of thinking people must be different; and mere opinion, especially of those in the lower walks in life, can have no effect at all upon the issue of the dispute: But I honestly declare, that though, as I think, these Colonists were treated with too much harshness formerly, it is my opinion, they would now act the wise part, would they frankly submit to the terms that have been offered them by the parliament of Britain: This would be wiser than to continue the war, and thereby bring ruin on their country; this would be a safer and wiser measure, than that, being seduced by the fallacious promise of assistance, they should fling themselves into the arms of France: That connection is unnatural; they would be much more happy connected as formerly with the generous English, with those who are of the same language, the same religion, the same blood with themselves, though they should not yet obtain independence. Ah! is there not some patriot, or some illustrious band of patriots, who shall try, and try with success, to renew this kindred connection? who shall wisely, and for the relief and happiness of the two contending parties, bring about this so much desired reconciliation and peace? O peace! thou first of human blessings, how desirable art thou? Peace! peace at home, and peace with our kinsmen and brethren at a great distance! Blessed be the man that brings us thee, who shall put a stop to levies, to depopulation abroad and at home; who shall command the bloody sword to be put into the scabbard, and the noisy machines of war to be still; who shall bid the Americans disband their armies, bid them subdue and cultivate their unimproved, but naturally fertile and widely extended territories; teach them to apply with

industry to every sort of manufactures, and to pursue commerce at large with the Asiatic and European nations; who shall teach them the arts of peace, to promote population, and, by establishing equal laws, and a generous system of liberty, to render their country an asylum to the many thousands who are, alas! at this day, borne down and impolitically oppressed in Europe; and who shall, at the same time, call home the British armies and fleets, to protect this fair, this exhausted, and ill-defended island against the unprovoked attempts of France, and even to strike, in self-defence, a merited blow against that menacing and faithless power. Who doth not pray, that Heaven may, as formerly, raise up such a patriot? Who doth not wish to see so happy a turn of our affairs?

6. I proceed to the last thing, namely, to mention, and mostly from the text, some reasons why a people, even though they have some religion, or at least appear to be serious, may continue long involved in distress, and even in the calamities of war itself. “Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

It appears, from many instances in scripture, that individuals who seek God may for a long time be held in worldly distress, whilst they wait that God will rescue them. This you know was the case with Job, and with the Psalmist also. The prayer, the expostulation of the righteous at such a time is, “Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.”—“Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for ever more? Hath God forgotten to be gra-

cious?" The church and people of God may be long in distress also. Thus the Israelites were for a long time borne down and oppressed in Egypt. "They sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried; and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage." So also the same people, in their long captivity, "By the rivers of Babylon, (say they) there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows, in the midst thereof." Why a sober and seemingly virtuous individual is sometimes long in pain or in adversity, or why in war, for instance, those who contend for the interest of liberty, of virtue, of the public good, of the human species, are often unsuccessful, is among these secret things which belong unto God. Why Cæsar was victorious at Pharsalia; why Octavius and Antony prevailed against Cassius and the amiable Brutus, on the plains of Philippi; why God, in his providence, hath suffered the Mahometans to enthrall so fair and so great a part of the ancient world; why the popish powers have so long and so much succeeded in trampling down the protestants, and checking the progress of the reformation; these, and many things of the like kind, are the mysterious ways of Heaven; "the ways of that God, who giveth not account of any of his matters." In private life, "the tabernacles of robbers prosper;" and in public, those societies or nations which to us seem to be the most sober, and innocent, and deserving, are disappointed of success, and are made to groan under a heavy burden of distress.

But, my brethren, we are perhaps very often and very widely mistaken in the estimate we make of the comparative merit of individuals or of societies. Most certainly the ways of God are right, and religion, if it restrain its votaries from daring crimes which might elevate them at once to worldly greatness, is the way to pass through the world with security and ease;

and yet it must be confessed that the church and people of God may sometimes be long in adversity: Of this dispensation of providence we are able to perceive many of the wise reasons, though we be too blind to see them all.

In general, God leaves his people long in trouble to alarm their consciences, to check them in their wild career, and force them to think of the eternal world. A constant course of prosperity is extremely dangerous; men, enchanted with the pleasures of the present world, seldom think of God, or of the world to come. Whilst they suffer affliction, they think on the causes of their suffering, and from the fear of greater sufferings in the life to come, they are, by the grace of God, led to repentance. It is therefore from his wisdom, and his loving kindness, that God afflicts men. And if a nation or society hath become corrupted and luxurious, it hath great need of being visited with the temporal judgments of God. The people may be awakened, and may repent sincerely; and for a while some stop may be put to the operation of of these causes which produce national ruin. But I should rather speak in particular of being kept long in these calamities which accompany a state of war.

And, first, it may be said that God keeps a people long in these calamities, to raise and keep alive in them a habitual dislike of war, and a strong aversion to begin any particular war, though, at first view, and when it is slightly considered, it may appear to be just. War is so horrible in its aspect, and so desolating in its progress, that it is not to be gone into from a sudden fit of passion, but after long and calm, and serious deliberation, after every method to procure, to buy peace, hath been tried, and tried in vain: And it should not be begun on account of any transient or frivolous act of injustice; nor should it be begun at all, unless the prince who begins it is rich, and strong, and powerful, and is in a manner certain

of success. Indeed, providence oftentimes confounds the proud and mighty, raises the spirits and increases the strength of the weak; and “the battle is not always to the strong.” Even this consideration will render a cautious prince, or a wise minister, slow to enter into war. One would think, that princes, rather than drench the nations in blood, should meet and finish their senseless differences by friendly conference, or compromise them by arbitration, or by casting lots, or even, as I hinted before, finish them by single combat; which last, however wrong it is in private quarrels, is surely a far less evil than to thin the human species by a desolating war, which the rulers have, from arrogance and a spirit of domination, hastened to commence. Indeed, if the subjects have foolishly approved of the rash steps of their rulers, and have even loudly encouraged them by fomenting their arrogance, and publicly calling upon them to enter into and to continue in coercive, violent, and sanguinary measures, offering to spend their lives and fortunes in the war, it seems but just in providence that they should be made to suffer for a long time the calamities of the war. Alas! it is commonly the grandees of a country, who, for selfish ends, do thus slavishly beat time with the rash measures of their rulers, and the bulk of the people are made to suffer. A war may be in some sort just, and yet it may be very imprudent and inexpedient to enter into it.

2. A people who have religion, who fast and pray for success, may continue long to bear the calamities of war, because they employ unjust measures in the prosecution of it. A person who is assaulted by another on the street, hath a just claim against that other in a court of law; but if he hath furiously turned upon the man who assaulted him, and beaten him with ten times more severity than he was beaten himself, his claim for redress becomes weaker at least than it

would otherwise have been. To obtain success, to be delivered from the calamities of war, it becomes a people to examine whether the measures they pursue in conducting the war be agreeable to the will of God or not. "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not."

It is strange that any people should expect or dare to pray for success, whilst the end they aim at is wrong, and the conduct they pursue obviously criminal. Can a thief, can a robber, who is eager to enrich himself by the spoils of the industrious, can he expect, that, while he perpetrates his crimes, God will hide him behind a thick cloud, so that he shall not be detected? Can the murderer pray in earnest that God may assist him to perpetrate an assassination? Or, in this debauched age, can the adulterer or the adulteress look up to God, and pray, and expect to succeed in their vile assignations and amorous intrigues?

Whilst we fast and pray for success in this tedious and lamentable war, let us, let our rulers and commanders, examine whether there be not some unjustifiable steps which we have taken already. Hath no unnecessary theft, or pillage, or plunder, or robbery, been committed? Hath no act of shocking and barbarous cruelty been done? Hath no army, or part of an army, been killed after they had surrendered, had thrown down their arms? Have none of the wounded been slaughtered on the field of battle? or have none of them been left to perish in their wounds, without being carried to hospitals, or any way taken care of? Hath no furious officer, hardened by bloodshed, been hounded out, at the head of a group of savages, to burn the houses and ruin the crops of the quiet and innocent planters? Or hath such an officer, been applauded and rewarded for having begun a horrid war of distress? Have no villages, no towns,

no cities, been wantonly burned, when they might have been preserved? If none of these things have been done, we have no doubt the better reason to hope for more success than we have yet met with; but if any of such enormously criminal measures have been pursued, need we wonder, that though we fast the war is prolonged, and that God hath not yet given us the success which we pray for? "Ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not." I next observe from the text,

3. That a people may be long held in distress, though they fast and ask for relief, because they ask amiss. "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." This is the character which the Spirit of God gives of those to whom this letter is addressed; and I wish it may not also be the character of many who are called by lawful authority to humble themselves as on this fast day.

We have fasted several times before. We have prayed for success, and that this inglorious war might soon come to an end; but hitherto things continue just as they were. It is well if our condition be not worse than when we commenced the war: "We looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." Still "we look for righteousness, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off." One year of this tiresome war, a second, a third, a fourth, hath gone over our heads, and another year of it is begun. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." May not this be a presumption that Heaven is displeased with our aim, and, by repeatedly counter-working our efforts, intimates to us that abundance of blood is shed already? I sincerely wish, that the fomenters of this war, on both sides of the Atlantic, may be of this mind. I remember, that when Otho, in his contest against Vitellius for the Roman empire,

had lost a battle, but had still great resources, and, in the opinion of his friends, great cause to hope for success, he choosed at once to take the desperate step of a Roman death, rather than to be the occasion of any more bloodshed of the Romans his fellow-citizens ! Or, at least, is not the great length of this war, which at first was expected to be easily finished in one short campaign, a presumption, that, in their professions to fast and to repent, the inhabitants of the land have not been sincere ? “ Will ye steal, and murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely by the name of God ? ” and, even by your laws, give encouragement to a false, a blasphemous, and idolatrous religion ? “ Will ye plead for Baal ? Will ye burn incense to Baal ? ” and yet come to this place, and, hanging down the head like a bulrush, pray for success in this woeful war, in which the nation hath been so long engaged, and by which it is so miserably exhausted ? First repent of your sins, and then you will be better prepared to ask, and may the rather hope to obtain.

It is possible there may be in high life some persons who are strangely corrupted ; but I hope there is not one of you who wishes for success, that you may lay hold on the revenue and the spoil of a foreign land, to be consumed upon your lusts. And if in this land there be really some persons so far debased as to wish for success in the war, that so they may get more gold and silver to consume in luxury, high living, drunkenness, and gluttony, or in gaming, lewdness, and expensive debauchery, grown up to a scandalous height, unheard of till this present age ; if there be others who covet greater riches, that they may with a heavier hand bear down and oppress their dependents abroad and at home ; if there be a still higher, a ministerial party, who, by a revenue squeezed from America, mean to create new offices, new posts, new pensions, greater bribes, in order (and by the means

of popery too) to establish and ascertain a system of despotic power, which shall be firm and lasting, like that in France, in Spain, and in other popish kingdoms; if all, or if any of these dangerous points be in view, we need not wonder that a wise and gracious God hath not yet granted a success which would be grievous to the people abroad, and, in its issue, lamentably hurtful to most of those at home. Whenever the plebeians in ancient Rome raised a loud cry against the oppression and heavy burdens which they were compelled to bear, the patricians, in order to silence these cries, trumped up a story about some injury that had been done to the state, and the necessity of a foreign war, to which war they hounded out the poor abased people. And in all ages it hath been usual for rulers to pursue wars and conquests abroad, that they might the more effectually enslave their subjects at home. And, without all question, riches from abroad, or greater riches in whatever way they come, enable the prince to oppress and enslave his subjects.

I just add, that we of this nation are perhaps hitherto held in the miseries of war, because, though we fast, we look not up to God for deliverance. We consider not that war is, in a special manner, an appeal to Heaven. By a sudden panic, by a storm at land, or by a turn of the wind at sea, God can make the war issue as he pleases. We presume on our own strength; we proudly expect to force success by the arm of flesh; we have been long disappointed; but we complain of our generals and our admirals, and attend not to the signs of the times, to the operation and course of the providence of God. Our hearts are not right with God; we fast and we pray; "we ask, but do not obtain, because we ask amiss;" not considering that victory, even in the justest war, is not to be prayed for but with submission to the will

of God, leaving it entirely to his infinite wisdom whether he will grant our petitions or not.

And after all, who knows that though henceforth our plans should be wisely laid, though our generals should display ever so good conduct, and our soldiers exert ever so much courage, yet we may at length find it to be the determination of God that we must part with that superiority which we have exercised so long over the extensive, the far distant western world, now become populous. If this matter, like the revolt of the ten tribes, is from God, "the counsel of the Lord shall stand, and who are we that we should fight against him! The Most High divideth to the nations their inheritance: God changeth the times and the seasons."

I must mention another sort of war, which I forgot to take notice of at the beginning of this discourse, I mean, wrangling about abstruse points and metaphysical opinions. To that sort of wars and fightings it is likely St. James had a view in the text; for the epistle is directed to the twelve tribes that were scattered abroad; and many of the Jews, even after they were converted to Christianity, were, it seems, eager enough to enter into metaphysical disputes. Indeed, for many centuries backward, such disputes had agitated the minds of speculative men, and some of the tenets, formerly disputed about, did very early become subjects of contention among Christians. By one party a point was keenly affirmed, and by another party it was keenly denied: The debate continued, and the contention grew warm; and this hath been the case in almost every age downward to the present time; for when the saw of contention is often drawn backwards and forwards, it is apt to grow hot in the hands of those who draw it. Hence so many processes against tenets and doctrines, some of them perhaps very innocent, others of them perfectly unintelligible; hence so many controversies in school divi-

nity, so much rage, so much fury, which hath often led to persecution, to war, and to bloodshed. This is the war of narrow-minded theologians; it rises among them, it is conducted and foughten by them: And this, like other wars, springs from the lusts of men; it comes not from the calm love of truth. Nor can it be said that they are the most enlightened in the knowledge of the truth who commence prosecutions about doctrines or opinions. It is commonly the dull who are the ringleaders, and the dull also who are the followers in this sort of war. In these the lust of pride is often very prevalent; they have formed a set of speculative opinions, and they cannot bear that others should differ from them, for this were to call their understanding in question. Or, this war springs from the lust of covetousness and ambition. Some person is like to be preferred to a lucrative and honourable place; his character must be blown; a report must be circulated that he is deeply tainted with heterodox principles; a process of heresy must be raised against him, that so he may be rejected, and that his accuser, or some one of his accuser's friends, may step into the place. But to investigate the origin, to mark the progress, to show the folly, the wickedness, and the dreadful effects of this theological war, would require a long discourse. I conclude this fast-sermon with repeating the text, and some of the spiritual exhortations which the apostle subjoins to it.

“From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even from your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not: ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.—God re-

sisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God.—Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you; cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

SERMON VI.

THE TASK-MASTERS.

Preached to a Congregation of Farmers, 1770.

And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters : for I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey——

Exod. iii. 7. 8.

THE affliction of the Israelites in Egypt is an emblem of the misery of mankind, whilst they were in a state of darkness, and under the bondage of corruption; and the deliverance of that people is a type of the redemption of the world by our blessed Lord and Saviour. You have already heard several discourses from the text, considered in that view. At present, as I know something of the state of this country, I think I hear the voice of humanity calling upon me to consider the text in a literal sense, and as descriptive of your worldly condition. For a course of years you have been complaining, that, by the high rate of land, you have, like the Israelites, been compelled to “make brick without straw;” that exorbitant rents have been rigorously exacted; that your labour is constant and severe; that though you have toiled hard, and put up with the coarsest fare, you were not able to satisfy the demands of those whom you look upon as task-masters; so that many of you here, as well as in other places, have been first stripped of any thing

you had, and then sent to shift for yourselves and your desolate families. But as the text describes your miserable condition, it also gives you consolation, and points at the means of your relief: "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-masters: for I know their sorrows." The children of Israel sighed by reason of their bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up to God by reason of their bondage. And God heard their groaning; "And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of that land unto a good land and a large, a land flowing with milk and honey."

I believe I need make no apology for the discourse which I intend to deliver. It is real pity and concern for you which hath made me think of it. The uncommonness of the subject should offend none of you. You are often alleging amongst yourselves, that men in my office have little pity or regard for you; that as we have been befriended by some great folks, or are sometimes in their company, and entertained by them, we approve of all they do, and think little of your misery, which we seldom see, or take not time or opportunity to know; and that whilst we are every day censuring and preaching against vices, which are either more natural or less grievous, we seldom or never speak a word against avarice, rigour, and oppression, as if they were not sins at all. I am persuaded that this opinion of yours is ill founded, or that the accusation is too general. For my part, I have quite a different view of things: I have never said or done any thing to extenuate the guilt of cruelty, or to strengthen the hands of pitiless oppressors: I shall never give any person cause to say of me, that I act or speak in the character of those who are hired and paid by the rich to preach against the poor and bear down the helpless. I know, indeed, that it is a

minister's chief business to strive that his people may by faith and holiness be prepared for eternal happiness; but I think also that he cannot but commiserate the visible distress of his flock, and wish them to enjoy some tolerable ease and comfort in the present life; and that if by assistance, counsel, or advice, he can alleviate their sufferings, he would be unworthy of his office unless he endeavoured it, always conducting himself by the invariable laws of truth and righteousness; and it is with a sincere aim to impart to you some consolation under your sufferings, and to point out some probable and prudent means of being delivered from them, that I preach this sermon.

Taking therefore the text before me as the ground of my discourse, I shall endeavour to observe the following method:

1. I will show, that the rate of land in this part of Britain is too high.
2. Mention some of the causes and means by which it hath been screwed up to such a height.
3. Show what are already the effects of the high rate of land, and what must be the further consequences of it.
4. That it is the duty and consolation of an afflicted people to cry unto God.
5. That, as the Israelites were delivered out of the house of bondage by the arm of God, so the people who are oppressed in this land have, by divine providence, an effectual means of being delivered from the hardships they groan under.
6. That it is the duty of an afflicted people to pursue the means which divine providence offers for their deliverance.

And though the subject be not common, the doctrine shall be sound; and I will express myself as much as I can in the style and language of holy scripture.

1. First, then, I am to show, that the rate of land

in this part of Britain is too high. Our people, like the Israelites, are forced to make brick without straw.

The method which Pharaoh took to afflict the Israelites was this: "He commanded the task-masters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make bricks as heretofore, let them go and gather straw for themselves; and the tale of the bricks which they did make heretofore, you shall lay upon them, ye shall not diminish ought thereof, for they be idle; let there more work be laid upon the men that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words." The task-masters, that is, the commissioners, the stewards, or factors, of that age, obeyed these hard and peremptory orders. "They spoke to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw; go, get you straw where you can find it, yet not ought of your work shall be diminished." So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw; they were willing, but not able, to do what they were commanded: But "the task-masters hastened them, saying, Fulfil your works, your daily task, as when there was straw." The officers, the overseers, or constables, which were of the children of Israel, were beaten and questioned, "Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task, both yesterday and this day, as heretofore?" These officers were forced to remonstrate to the king, that the people could not furnish the tale of the bricks except straw were given them. But the answer they received was: "Ye are idle, ye are idle; get you to your burdens; go therefore now and work; for there shall no straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the tale of the bricks."

Is not that which was transacted in Egypt a striking picture of what is now so generally done in this country? The peremptory order of the proprietor, or

his task-master, to the tenant is, You shall pay double or triple for the farm you now possess; or, You shall pay the same sum for the half or third part of it; the farm is diminished, but you shall not diminish the tale of the bricks, the tale of the bolls, or pounds Sterling. The question to the Israelites was, "Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task, both yesterday and this day?" The question to our farmers is, Wherefore have ye not paid your Martinmas and your Whitsunday terms rent? When the Israelites could not furnish the tale of the bricks, they were beaten: Our farmers, when they cannot pay, if they be not beaten in a literal sense, are imprisoned, and beaten with hunger; any thing they have is barbarously taken from them, and they are turned out and left to the mercy of the wide world.

It is certainly but just, that the farmer should pay rent in proportion to the extent and quality of the land he possesseth; nay, some twenty or thirty years ago, many tenants lived in such indolence and lethargy, that it was expedient to raise their rents considerably, in order to stir them up to more industry and labour: But there is a measure in every thing; and as rents may be too low, they may also be too high.

But it is perhaps difficult to say what is a reasonable rent, or what proportion of the increase of land the farmer ought to pay. I remember, that, after the seven years famine in Egypt, when the whole land had become the property of Pharaoh, so just and good a man as Joseph made it a standing law, that the king should have the fifth part: "And it shall come to pass, in the increase, that thou shall give the fifth part to Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for the seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your household, and for your little ones." A very moderate rent, if we consider the fertility of Egypt, that the soil needed no manure

and little cultivation, "where the people sowed the seed, and watered it with their foot, as a garden of herbs." The rent just mentioned may therefore be looked upon as that which was demanded for rich land in a state of cultivation. But our landholders let out their farms, not with respect to what the land is able to produce, uncultivated as it is, when the tenant enters to it, but by what it is expected to produce after the tenant; by great labour and expence, shall have got it put into good heart: An unfair way of dealing, and by which the credulous tenant is often imposed upon. A distinction indeed should be made between the value of land as it now is, and that which may be the value of it when it shall be well cultivated: And one would think, that the fourth part of the produce of uncultivated land, and a little more, but not amounting to the third of its produce, when improved by the labour and expence of the tenant, is a sufficient rent; and that land which may, one year in ten, yield eight bolls, but at an average during that space yield not more than five, is too dear at 40s. or 30s. or even 20s. per acre.

But, in computations of this sort, it is possible one may err; for there are various circumstances which may render the same rent, for land of the same quality, tolerable in one place, and too high in another. There is, however, a pretty certain mark or rule, by which we may be able to judge whether the rent of a farm is too high or not. When the farmer, by his skill, and toil, and industry, is able to provide the necessaries, and ordinary accommodations of life, suitable to his humble station, and also to make some provision for the infirmities of his old age, or for the settlement of his children, he may then be thought to pay no more but a reasonable rent; but when he is skilful in his business, when he labours and toils early and late, and lives in an unexpensive and frugal

manner, and upon the cheapest food, and is notwithstanding unable to lay up any thing for himself or his children, and cannot even, as the expression is, make the two ends of it to meet, cannot furnish the tale of the brick, or pay his rent in due time, then he is unquestionably overcharged; his rent is too high. If we may judge by this rule, which appears to be equitable, it is undeniable, that, in many parts of Scotland, too high a rent is exacted, and that many industrious farmers are oppressed: By their utmost labour and industry they cannot live; though their industry entitles them not only to an insured livelihood, but to a certain profit over and above. This oppression was begun long ago; it hath been growing for a course of years; and is at this day risen to a very great height: "Behold the day, behold, it is come, the morning is gone forth, the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded, violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness."

I do not mean, or say, that this oppression is yet become universal. There are, in several places of the country, men of prudence and humanity; who suffer their tenants to live in tolerable ease; and, blessed be God, they are the men who, of all other landlords, are in the most easy and flourishing circumstances; but the number of them is yearly decreasing. They are incited by the workings of avarice; they are tempted by the example of their neighbours; they are exhorted and advised by bad counsellors, to adopt the common practice: For there are such counsellors here just as there were in Jerusalem of old: "The spirit," says the prophet, "took me by a lock of mine head, and lift me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house; and behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord; these are the men that devise mischief,

and give wicked counsel in this city." These counsellors and advisers, if they offer not themselves, are sent for to set the highest value on an estate that is to be sold, or a farm that is to be let; and, by the extravagant value they rate them at, commonly mar the sale of the one, and either mar the letting of the other, or lessen the clear rent of it; and yet so strong and epidemical is the spirit of screwing up land, that, while these advisers are doing real mischief, there are intelligent people who publicly applaud them for their good management; applaud them for what they ought to be ashamed of, as it is severity to the poor, impoverisheth the landholder, and tends to the ruin and desolation of the country. By means of these advisers, the evil I speak of becomes daily more universal; but though men may applaud them, God is angry with them, "because," says he, "with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, and strengthened the hands of the wicked. I will deliver my people out of your hand, and they shall no more be in your hand to be hunted, and ye shall know that I am the Lord."

Though the point to be established under this head of discourse may seem clear enough already, and is pretty universally believed, I will here mention a few particulars, which will make it evident, that the rent exacted for land in this country is by much too high. And,

1. It is commonly much higher than what is demanded for the fertile lands in England: There, the land is rich; here, it is, for the most part, poor; and yet here, making allowance for the different measure, double, or more, is paid for it. The common people of Scotland, from time immemorial, have, by means and causes which I need not mention, been crushed down and held in miserable bondage. The free-spirited English farmer would disdain to drudge, and, at the same time, live so poorly as our people would

be content to do: They breathe the air of liberty; and would sooner choose to go to the farthest parts of the world than starve themselves, or just keep in their lives by a scrimp and poor subsistence, whilst all the profit of their labour accrued to greedy landlords, who feed richly, and live at ease; they would not submit to make brick without straw. In fact, by the best computations that have yet been made, the rent of the corn-fields, over all England, is not more than two-ninths of their produce. In Norfolk, the rich fields, under a modern let, are rented at 10s. or a little more; and even so high a rent is not common, for most of the land is much lower; and, surely, if 10s. is the rent of good land in England, 40s. 30s. or even 20s. an acre, is too high a rent for ordinary land here.

2. That the rent of land is too high, appears, because a great number of families have been forced to leave the business of farming. They had been educated in that business, and accustomed to it from their youth; they had a strong desire to continue in it, and had, or knew no other way to earn their bread; and yet, by the high rent exacted from them, they have been obliged to leave it. Some of them, perhaps, are able to maintain themselves for a little time; but most of them are first stripped of any little thing they had, and then unmercifully driven away to shift for themselves. One cannot walk in the streets of a city without seeing them, and bemoaning their lamentable condition. Many of them are unable to work, or are not employed; and, having been all their lives unaccustomed to it, they are ashamed, and had rather starve than beg. They are, in fact, more miserable than those who, from their childhood, have begged from door to door: "Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets; their skin cleaveth to their bones; it withereth, it is become like a stick; they are slain with

hunger, and pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field."

3. Rent is too high; because it is certain, that many industrious tenants, now in the possession of farms, are ruined, and must speedily depart from them. They got leases, some six or seven years ago, when oat-meal was at 15d. a-peck: The landholders persuaded them, and they foolishly believed, that it would continue at that high rate: They have laboured, and starved themselves, and struggled for so many years to keep these farms, and now they can do no more. At harvest, the greedy landlord must have every farthing they are worth; and all they have, when he hath got it, will not make up the extravagant rent they had engaged to pay. Some of you whom I have now in my eye are of this number; and when, in the course of my visiting, I step into one of your dismal cottages, I assure you, I pity your condition. I see before me an assemblage of all the ills of human life; poverty, nakedness, hunger; the image of misery and death strike all senses! I am overwhelmed with sorrow; my voice is stopped! O ye oppressors, of what hard materials are your hearts made! Will you not consider, that there is a just God, and a time coming, when those whom you oppress "shall be comforted, and you tormented!"

There is another class, who, if they could, would immediately leave their farms: These were very substantial people a few years ago; but having taken farms at an extravagant rent, have thereby lost a half, or two-thirds of their stock already, and are desirous to leave the farms, to prevent their utter ruin. In one corner, there are industrious men, coming one by one to the masters, and beseeching them in vain to break their leases, and take back the farms, with all the expensive improvements they have made upon them. In other places, they are humbly, and

repeatedly attending the rigid factor, by fifties or hundreds, earnestly beseeching the same thing, but to no purpose. Can any person believe, that these farmers, fond of their occupation, would be willing to part with their leases, and throw up their farms, which, for five or six years, they have improved, with great labour and expence, if they could hope to live by them, or recover the loss they have already sustained? Would a hundred men, hitherto esteemed prudent, would a whole country-side become all at once so infatuated? But except one, who had paid no rent for three or four years, the rest have solicited in vain to have their leases taken off their hands; nor do I meet with any man who expects that such of them as have remaining stocks will get quit of their farms, till all their stocks are drained into the landlord's pocket, and they reduced to beggary. We talk of the slavery of the peasants in Denmark and Poland; if this that is transacted among ourselves be not oppression, and slavery into the bargain, it is at least very like it.

4. In many corners of the country, there are considerable tracks of land, formerly inhabited, which are lying altogether waste: This is a visible proof that rent is too high. If any one considers, what I hinted at before, the uncommon eagerness with which our country people push to have each of them a farm, their fondness to pursue that business, and their inability to support themselves by any other, he will easily be convinced, that so many tracks of arable land (I do not speak of pastures) are lying desolate for no other cause but that too high a rent is demanded for them. If one travels through the country, and asks the reason why so many fields are lying uncultivated, the answer he receives is, "My Lord such-a-thing, or his Honour such-a-thing, hath accurately measured all his lands, even the bogs, the rocks, and the barren mountains, and is demanding

20s. for every acre of it ; but he can find nobody to offer it ; and every man is convinced, that, though it should be offered, nobody will be able to pay it ; because it is three or four times what the land is worth."

I will only mention another proof that rent is too high ; and it is this, that, for several years past, considerable numbers of farmers have been leaving this country and going to foreign lands. It is not an ordinary degree of oppression which is able to overcome that strong, and, in many cases, foolish attachment which all men, but especially the common people, have to their native country. What grief did several of you feel, what pitiable lamentations did you make, when you were driven from these lands and houses, where you, your fathers, and grandfathers, had spent their days ! How did you, when going away, return still back again, to look at the humble cottages where you and your children were born ! How did you cast back your eyes, to take the last and parting view of the poor but innocent abodes of your ancestors ! But when one is made to toil and starve in the spot where he was born, his attachment to that spot is absurd and foolish. You are sensible it is foolish ; oppression taught you by degrees to overcome it. Your brethren now abroad have completely overcome it : They have overcome, not only the desire of the spot where they had long dwelt, but their attachment to the country in general : They saw there was something essentially wrong in its police ; because, though they were industrious, they could not maintain themselves by the product of their industry : They desired to abide in it, but could not get subsistence ; they laboured in an useful occupation, but others run away with the profit of their labour. And most certain it is, that when any man in health continues attached to a country where, by his utmost toil and industry, he is not able to sup-

port himself and family in a decent and comfortable manner, he discovers a childish weakness, and sins against his own soul.—From the several reasons I have mentioned, it is evident, even to a demonstration, that the rent exacted in this country is by far too high. I proceed to the next head of discourse, namely, to mention,

2. Some of the causes and means by which rent hath been screwed up to such a height. And,

1. The original cause of this is the blind avarice of the landholders and task-masters: From their avarice, they have racked the rent of land so prodigiously, and, from the same principle, they are wishing and hoping it may rise still higher. You may see one of them, with a newspaper in his hand, looking at nothing but the prices of grain, what it costs at distant markets, and computing how dear the carriage must render it if brought here. Another will tell you, that the crop has failed in the Lothians; that grain is rising fast, and that land must rise of course; that it is dear in England, and he is sure and expects it will every year rise higher and higher here: An inhuman and senseless expectation; for it is much more probable that it will fall. Since 1680, the price of grain, wheat for instance, fell gradually in England to the year 1760; during the last half of that period it fell 25 per cent.; and if our country is now in such a state towards improvement as England was in 1680, may we not expect that it will fall here just as it did there? The rise of grain should not be ascribed to wrong causes, nor measured by the unfavourable seasons we have had of late, but by an average of 30 or 40 years: And may we not trust in God's providence that favourable seasons will return? These landholders seem, many of them, to be as blind as they are avaricious; for it is not their interest that the price of grain should rise: If, unhappily, that should be the case, our manufactures must

dwindle to ruin. Formerly, in a dear year, they were kept alive by the cheapness of fuel; but by the monopoly of coal that hath been lately formed, the price of that commodity is nearly doubled, and the poor distressed: And if the price of grain shall also rise, and continue high, the manufacturers will withdraw, and go where grain is cheap; and then there may be bread enough, but few to buy or eat it. Manufactures have greatly contributed to raise the value of land; and the landholders, ignorantly to be sure, seem to aim at the ruin of manufactures; like the viper, which, they say, is no sooner hatched and sees the light, but it turns about and devours its mother.

2. The short leases which landlords grant are another means of raising the rent of land. These leases are a mighty discouragement to the industrious farmer, and the almost never failing means of injuring and oppressing him. When he hath, with sore labour and expence, brought his ground into good heart, and the lease is near expiring, the task-master demands a higher rent from him, which he must either give or be gone. No allowance will be made him; if he comes not up to what is demanded, some of his neighbours will; the highest offer will be welcome to the inhuman task-master, and the laborious skilful farmer must lose the expected fruits of his labour.

3. It oftentimes happens, that, when a tenant is thriving in his farm, the master looks upon him with an evil eye, and falls upon some pretence to get him removed: "He hath occasion for that farm himself; it lies so convenient for his policy that he cannot want it; he must have the third of it for a new plantation; and it will save much trouble, both to him and the tenant, just to let him have the whole." And, upon such frivolous and false pretences, enforced by the seasonable application of

some use of terror, many tenants are so silly and timorous, as to throw up their farms, to gratify the avarice of their master; but then, if they be rich enough, they may, after he hath got their farms into his hand, give double the rent at which they had a perfect right to have possessed them till the former leases had expired.

If this method is not successful, then the landholder contrives some ground of quarrel; the tenant hath plowed a furrow off his neighbour's land; or hath cut down some tree; or allowed some fence to decay; or is not keeping the house in thatch; or hath beaten his master's dog, when it was worrying his sheep; or hath shot a hare; or did not take off his bonnet, and show respect to his lady when she was passing by him with Lady such-a-thing; or he is fallen short in his payments (though the landlord himself declined to take his rent when offered, saying he had at that time no need of money); or he is running out the farm; or not managing it according to the terms of the lease; that therefore he must immediately remove; and a process is commenced. Then the landlord may retain the most beggarly of his dependents to perjure themselves, if need be. The contention is begun, and the tenant may easily foresee its issue: His cause is to be decided by judges who are connected with, or related to his landlord; who are themselves landlords; and not all of them exempt from these same iniquitous practices concerning which they are to judge. In short, the tenant is ejected, and the landlord gets the farm, which he pretended was ruined and worn out; and yet the very next day he lets it at double the former rent, and is not ashamed. I see some of you before me against whom this dreadful game hath been lately played off.

The causes and means hitherto mentioned, by which the rent of land hath been screwed up so high, are

such as flow from the avarice and iniquity of other people; but I must tell you also,

4. That this high rate of land is in a great degree owing to yourselves. By your credulity and vanity, you are the means and cause of that same evil which oppresses you. Whenever a farm is to be let, there are perhaps fifty of you striving to get it, all outbidding one another, and offering for it at a rate which every man of sense foresees you will never be able to pay. When an old tenant hath greatly improved his farm, and the task-master is asking a higher rent, many of you are lying at the catch, and ready to offer all that he demands, by which means you effectually ruin yourselves, and are partners with the task-master in his injustice and oppression. Those who have farms already, but want to have additional or greater ones—the sons of farmers—the servants who have made a little stock—sometimes also tradesmen have, for many years past, by the high offers they made, turned the weak heads of the landholders, and made them believe that no rate was too high for their lands. Had it not been, that when any farm was to be let, there were so many in competition bidding high for it, it would have been impossible that the oppression of farmers could have come to such a lamentable height as it hath actually reached: For, could the proprietors have turned the arable land into pasture? A great part of Scotland is naturally such; and, many years ago, much arable land was wrested from the tenants, and applied to the maintenance of sheep and black cattle; so that long ago as great a proportion of land was set aside for pasture as was likely to turn to good account. Could the landholders have kept all the farms in their natural possession, as they call it, this they must soon have wearied of, and the wisest of them would hardly have tried it. For hitherto gentlemen have found, that when they turned their own farmers, though they might raise

very good crops, they were very far from being gainers by the trade. Would they have tried to bring tenants from some other country? But who would have submitted to such toil and misery as you have undergone? What then must they have done with their land? Why, if you had been wise, they would have been obliged to let it to you at a reasonable rate; but you were and are foolish, and they avail themselves of your folly. Some of them let their lands openly by way of auction or public roup; and then the task-master, with all his eloquence, displays the wonderful fertility and advantages of his farms; and with the strong spiritous bottle in his hand, he reaches out full bumpers to every rash bidder, and intoxicates and cajoles them to ruin themselves and one another. Other landlords choose a method perhaps as insnaring; I am sure it is more debasing: They publicly advertise, that every one who wants such or such a farm shall send to them his highest offer inclosed. By this means they have opportunity to inquire into the circumstances of the several offerers, and to pitch on that one who hath the largest stock. Of this they are extremely desirous. You may hear one of them who has a pitiful farm to let, boasting of its goodness, and wishing he had a sensible tenant to it who has 500 l. or 600 l. stock. These men never consider, that if a man is sensible, and has 500 l. he will disdain to concern himself with such beggarly farms, while he hath the chance of fifty to one of employing it to better purpose in some branch of merchandise or manufacture, and knows, that to these farms many "come full and go away empty." But though a man of sense is on his guard at their roups and in making offers to them, the weak are caught. The landholder assures them, that the soil of his land is so rich, that every acre of it will yield ten or twelve bolls; and, by a fatal credulity, the farmers believe that he is speaking truth. Their vanity to be farmers

helps also to insnare them. In this country, a farmer is more reputable than a tradesman; which, I suppose, hath happened by the integrity of ancient farmers, and the usefulness of their business; just as I know a constable in a certain parish, who, by his honest and conscientious walk, hath rendered his humble office far more respectable than that of his landlord, who is a judge. It is from this vanity that the sons of farmers think shame to go to service, and those who have been long in service desire much to have farms. This vanity is as a halter about your neck, of which the task-master takes fast hold, and thereby leads you to ruin. This vanity you should have controuled, and continued in service, or at your trades, and then you might have passed through life with tolerable comfort. But by an excess of credulity you believed the deceitful words of the landholders. Your vanity made you offer high for every farm, even for such as had been long possessed by the tenants then living upon them; a thing against which there is always an outcry; and it is rarely or never done in England; and which, if not directly unjust, doth at least border upon injustice, and encourages oppression. You got the old tenants removed; your high offers were accepted; you were unable to pay; and it was even impossible you should. Hence there are so many of you, in this very assembly, who have had your crops seized upon, your cattle pointed and driven away, your houses plundered, and your persons imprisoned; your children who were able, sent to service or to beg, and the rest starving in your miserable huts. Thus the rent of land is high, from the avarice and artifices of the landholder, and from the credulity and vanity of the farmer.

Before I dismiss this head, I cannot but take notice, that the pretence for afflicting the Israelites was an aversion to idleness: "Ye are idle, ye are idle," said the task-masters. And it is remarkable, that our

noble lords and commoners discover also a mighty abhorrence of that same sin of idleness; they would make us believe that they are in fear lest the very souls of their tenants should be ruined by it; they dread the effects of it at least on their inferiors. You may hear one of them boasting with much self-applause: "Such a tenant of mine was idle; I doubled his rents; he works hard soon and late; he attends to his business even on the Sundays; so that I believe he will pay me better now than he did before." There have been ignorant and perverse statesmen who gave out, that the heavier the taxes were which they imposed on the nation, the subjects became the more happy; and there are landholders of a like understanding and temper, who believe, that the higher the rents are which they exact from their tenants, they are in the better condition to pay them. The next head of discourse is to show,

3. What are already the effects of the high rate of land, and what must be the further consequences of it. Its effects are grievous to individuals, and in time must hurt or ruin the nation; it is the cause of misery, and debauches the morals of the people. For,

1. It is oppression; and oppression, as hath been seen in part already, is misery: It is indeed but another name for it. Perpetual and sore bodily labour, without any prospect of enjoying the fruits of it, or of some ease, is certainly misery. Indeed the severity of labour is mitigated by the hope of ease or profit; but here it often happens, that no such hope can be entertained. By the hardest labour, in very many cases, no more can be done but the tale of the bricks made up; as much gained as will pay the greedy master. Nay, in many instances this cannot be done; and then the distress and misery of the poor farmer is complete. He hath the vexation to see his children starved and naked, his house spoiled, his

corn and cattle seized upon, to satisfy the demands of his task-master; demands which are highly unreasonable, but which by his credulity he had obliged himself to fulfil.

2. The high rate of land occasions a sort of hostility between the rich and the poor. They are really like the plebeians and patricians in ancient Rome, in a state of war against one another. The landholders have no compassion on the poor laborious farmers; they relent not at the sight of their indigence and misery. Let the tenant's wants be ever so deplorable; let his wretchedness be ever so unmerited; though his corn-fields have been destroyed by winds or rains, all this is no matter to almost any master. He must have, without abatement, all that in rigour of law he can demand, whatever may become of the tenant and his family. On the other hand, the farmers have a real hatred of their landlords, whom they find to be so rigid task-masters; they imprecate the curse and vengeance of God upon them and their families. Living miserably under them, and unable, by all their toil, to pay them, they are every moment in fear lest they come upon them, and strip them of all they have, and turn them out of doors. Hence it is, that if any man in rich equipage and dress is seen near their houses, they think it must be their landlord, and are at once thrown into a dreadful alarm. Were the great beneficent in proportion to their power, or were they but looked upon as harmless, the poor would rejoice to see them, and think themselves honoured to meet and converse with them. But, at the very sight of them, the hapless farmer and his family expect immediate beggary and ruin; the children run and hide their heads; the wife trembles; and the farmer himself, when called upon, goes to meet his master with all the expressive symptoms of aversion, hatred, and fear. Having felt the rigour of their masters so often, they dread to feel it again: Like those ancient slaves,

who had weapons in their hands, and were able to defend themselves, but when they saw the scourges lifted up, the strokes of which they had so often felt, they in a panic immediately threw down their weapons, and took to their heels.

3. Our common people, by being so rigorously used, have the sense of truth and justice miserably blunted. They fall into a low sort of trick and cunning, and are many of them of a thievish disposition. Oppression, it is said, will make a wise man mad: "Give me not poverty, (Agur prays) lest I steal, and take the name of my God in vain." The slaves in ancient times are described as having been deceitful, and who thought it no crime to pilfer and steal; of which vices their slavery and rigorous treatment are supposed to have been the cause. Our poor farmers, when they cannot by all their toil pay their masters, and are stripped of all they have, look on that treatment as robbery, and as unjustifiable as theft itself. By pitiful artifices they learn to retaliate, and to act against truth and justice. It is really astonishing to see how false many of them are, and how little sense they have that justice is a duty. This is no doubt owing to other powerful causes; but it is fatally helped on by the oppression they suffer; for it is chiefly against the rich that their cunning is played off, and they imagine it is excusable even to steal from them. Believing them to be their natural enemies, provided they can do it with impunity, they scruple not to pilfer and steal from them, and to impose upon them by trick and chicane. Nay, from the iniquity they bear towards their superiors, there are many of them who would rejoice at their downfall. Lamentable indeed is their want of charity: If a factor breaks his leg when he is going to pillage a poor man's house, they say the judgments of God have begun to overtake him; if a task-master dies of a surfeit, though he expresses some remorse, and be in dreadful agony and horror at the thought of his

oppression, you hear them saying, with a malignant sneer, The oppressor hath got his portion, and is now gone to his own place !

4. In consequence of the drudgery and the great hardships they undergo, the common people become stupid and unconcerned about religion and their immortal souls. A temporary affliction is oftentimes the means of rousing men to serious thought, but a continued oppression benumbs their spirits, and renders them incapable of thought and action. Totally occupied about their present state, and groaning under the weight of immediate sufferings, they have neither time nor inclination to think of the means of escaping sufferings of an endless duration. The question with them is not, How shall we escape the wrath that is to come ? But, How shall we pay a rigid landlord ? How shall we save our cattle from being driven away, our houses from being plundered, and our children from starving ? How shall we escape the hand of oppression, and the wrath of cruel men who have us in their power ? And as oppression disqualifies men from thinking on God and the state of their immortal souls, it even enervates their minds so much, that they are incapable of discerning the means of bettering their circumstances in the present life. As if transformed into stocks and stones, they sit motionless, and receive on their backs the furrows of oppression. Many of them might find, even in this country, the means of lessening their misery, at least in some degree ; but they have lost the exercise of reason ; they dream on from day to day, in a drowsy inactivity ; and if at any time they see a means of being delivered from bondage and misery, the smallest difficulty terrifies them, and makes them choose to abide in slavery. This stupifying effect of oppression is remarkably evident from the history of the Israelites. Even when their deliverance was actually begun ; when, by a train of miracles, they had got so far out of E-

gypt, and knew that God was on their side ; yet when they see Pharaoh and the Egyptians coming after them, they said unto Moses, “ Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness ? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us out of Egypt ? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians ? For it had been better for us that we should serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness.” They trusted not in God ; their minds were debased “ for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.” Just so our farmers, by sore drudgery, have their spirits depressed and their minds debased. Having been long in slavery, they seem to be in conceit with slavery. When oppressed, they dare not complain ; when robbed and beaten, they will not go beyond the reach of the strokes ; when rid upon and unmercifully battered by the Balaams of the age, like dumb asses, they will not open their mouths. Had they spirit, and could speak, they might with great propriety say to their oppressors, as the ass of the old covetous and blindfolded Balaam said to him, “ What have I done ? Why hast thou smitten me ? Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine ?” I may add,

5. That the screwing up of rent to an exorbitant pitch doth in fact diminish the clear incomes of the landlord. Some are so fond of a nominal high rent, that, rejecting the offers of wealthy tenants which would be paid, they let their lands to poor beggarly people, who, whatever they may promise, will never pay a shilling. And whenever a substantial tenant finds, that by all his toil he will not be able to pay the whole of his rent, he scarcely endeavours to pay any part of it ; he loses all courage ; he hath no sufficient motive to labour, because he sees that the profit of his labour will accrue not to himself, but to his task-master. Nay, foreseeing that all he hath will in

a little time be violently taken from him, he takes care beforehand to secrete and put out of the way as much of his substance as he can. Do not you and I know of great estates which have been mismanaged, and the incomes of them diminished by the method I speak of?

Time would fail me to mention all the deplorable effects of the high rate of land. These I have taken notice of relate to the farmers who are oppressed; but its effects are grievous and distressing to others also, and destructive to the public. When a large territory is thrown waste, the poor people who are driven away become a burden on some neighbouring district or parish; or they resort to cities, which is the cause that such swarms of beggars are to be seen on the streets and in the neighbourhood of great towns. This itself is a severer grievance than is commonly believed; for in this nation we have no poor rates; and the landed gentlemen, and whoever is rich, have almost to a man deserted the church, where contributions are made for the poor; by which means the farmers and tradesmen have got the burden of supporting the poor; and as the number of them, by the means of high rents, hath multiplied so fast, to support them is a very grievous burden indeed. From the same cause agriculture is discouraged, and scarcity may be the consequence. This land, though its soil in general is not rich, is by proper cultivation able to maintain perhaps double the number of its present inhabitants; and the greater the number of industrious hands employed in cultivating the earth, the greater is the produce which it yields: But some of our laborious people have already been driven abroad, and many of them have been forced to apply to other employments at home. It is the advantage and security of any country to raise from itself sufficient subsistence for all its inhabitants; for it is but a precarious means of support which may be expected by importation from foreign markets, as is just now evident from ex-

perience. The sea-ports are and have been open, and yet the price of grain hath been rising for several months; and what dismal effect the continued scarcity or dearth of grain must have on the manufactures of the country is visible to every person. From the same cause also, people who are rigorously dealt with lose all concern for the welfare of the country. If they were allowed to pass their days in tolerable ease, they would, like the children of Israel in Babylon, seek the good of the land where they dwell; but if they are squeezed, and their oppression be extreme, they lose, as I have said, all attachment to a country where they find themselves so miserable. There must needs be bitter envyings and intestine grudges where the wealth of a country flows into the hands of a few: If these few are supposed not to have their minds enlarged with knowledge, or embellished with those arts which adorn human nature; if, besides, they are reputed to be selfish and rapacious, they may depend upon it, that, whatever outward respect they meet with, they are both hated and despised. They have much of the property of the country, and seem not to deserve it; that country therefore will be weakly defended against the attacks of foreign enemies; for no man will judge that to be his country, where he neither hath nor ever can have any property at all; nor will he defend the property of others with that spirit with which he is keen to fight for his own. An oppressed people look upon themselves as unconnected with the country, and cease to have any anxiety about its welfare. Tell them that the land is going to be invaded by a foreign army, they are totally unalarmed; being wretched themselves, they are perfectly indifferent whether domestic oppressors or foreign invaders shall be successful; they are like the ass in the meadow, and must still bear their burdens. Would the Israelites, after they had been forced to make brick without straw, have taken up arms to fight

for the Egyptians, had the Ethiopians then invaded the country? They might have stood neuter, or made their escape from misery in the scuffle; or possibly a quick and pungent sense of oppression might have provoked them to join the invaders, whose severity they had never experienced.

To be short, the high rate of land must in the issue produce depopulation. This is an effect which Pharaoh foresaw must, without a miracle, follow on the heels of oppression; "And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now are many, and you make them rest from their burdens. Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply. Therefore did they set task-masters over them to afflict them with their burdens." Therefore, that they might not multiply, they set task-masters over them. They formed a political scheme of oppression, and they clearly foresaw its consequence; and that consequence, though not foreseen by our landed men, is, from the measures they pursue, as certain as if it were in fact foreseen and intended by them. Wherever there is a place where two persons can live commodiously, there will be a marriage; which, I may say, is the only method of continuing or increasing the numbers of a people; and by nature both parties are powerfully inclined to marry, except they be hindered by the difficulty of subsistence. But when a young man hath seen his father impoverished and driven from house and home, hath been pinched with hunger in his youth, and is yet but able to support himself, he will not be rash to divide the means of his subsistence by entering into a marriage-connection. It is indeed observable, that many of the upper or genteel people in this country scarce marry at all; and some are of opinion that this is far from being a detriment to the public, and that statesmen should discourage such marriages, because they would but increase the number of idle and useless people; an opinion which I think is impolitical

and ill founded: I am sure it is unnatural and inhumane; an error proceeding upon a supposition that the children of such marriages could not be useful in the church, the navy, or the army, or would thereby be degraded; an error that springs from not attending to an effect, a growing effect of commerce, which is, to destroy or level all distinction of ranks, to set the industrious son of a farmer or mechanic above the idle son of a peer, and makes it no way shameful for the son of a peer to plead at the bar, or be busy in the counting-house. Nay, it is fifty to one if the children produced by such marriages have not more merit than those of the wealthy: In youth, they will imbibe instruction, and learn useful arts, because they know they must do it; whereas most of those who know they are born to a great fortune reject and despise education, and, be they ever so rich, continue all their lives good for nothing. And I hope no statesman in Britain shall ever be invested with the dangerous power of hindering a marriage, because he imagines the fortune of the parties to be less than their rank would require. But though to some people, and in some cases, this point may appear somewhat dubious, yet every person must see that what I aim at is evident even to a demonstration; that when laborious people, by the hardships they lie under, are terrified from marriage, that tends directly to the depopulation and ruin of a country, because the number of working hands is the riches and strength of a nation. In short, depopulation must be the effect of the high rate of land, because a people oppressed in one country will naturally resort to some other. If the price of grain is high, the manufacturers will go elsewhere; if it falls low while rent is high, the farmers must withdraw to some place where they can live. On either supposition, high rents must be the cause of depopulation. This, it is true, will weaken the country these people depart from; but they will con-

sider, and if they be wise they ought to consider, that a country is their country no longer than by reasonable labour and industry they are able to provide a tolerable subsistence in it. I shall have occasion to enlarge farther on this point under a following head of discourse; at present I break off, and conclude this forenoon's sermon. But as I apprehend there are some hearing me who have either exacted extravagant rents, or encouraged and advised that rigour and oppression, I will take the liberty of making a short address to them in the language of holy writ.

“Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity; is it not for you to know judgment, who hate the good and love the evil? By reason of the multitude of your oppressions, you make the oppressed to cry; men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out; they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty. You pluck off their skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. You turn judgment into wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth. You pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor. You cause them to go naked without clothing, and take away the sheaf from the hungry.” If a tenant thrives in your land, you grudge at his prosperity; you either rack his rent that he may thrive no more, or you send him adrift, and bereave him of the fruit of his labour. If your tenants go to wreck, as many of them must do, you see their miserable state, and you have no pity; you snatch the lean morsel from the starving mouth, and embitter the misery of the miserable. Are your hearts steeled against all the impressions of humanity? Are your ears shut against the piercing and doleful cries of the poor? Do not you hear them often saying to you, “We have understanding as well as you; where-

fore are we counted to you as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight? How long will it be ere you make an end of rigour towards us? Did not he that formed us in the womb form you? Are not our natural wants the same with yours? Is our strength the strength of stones, or is our flesh of brass? You compel us to make brick without straw; you lay burdens upon us which crush us to the ground. We desire to live and die in the land where we were born; we are content to labour, and to labour hard, to do justice to you, and make you live at ease; but while we strive to answer your severe demands, we wear out our strength with toil; our children are naked and starving, and we have neither clothes nor bread to give them. We wished to work for you, and to look upon you as our nursing-fathers; but you have no pity on us. Even the sea-monsters draw out the breast, and give suck to their little ones; but you are become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness; we must leave this land, we must seek out another abode, and bid you farewell."

That I may still speak to you in the language of scripture, "Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, which are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say, Bring and let us drink; who drive away the ass of the fatherless, and take the widow's ox for a pledge, and turn the needy out of the way, so that the poor of the earth hide themselves." By your exactions, you have already begun to scatter the people and to drive them away. If you be not as blind as you are avaricious, do you not see that you are ruining yourselves? What do you think will be your condition, if one or two hundred thousand people shall leave you, and take up their dwelling in foreign lands? In that case, must not your rent sink very low? You perhaps imagine there is not room for them abroad; but you mistake the matter; there is a good land, and a large, open

to receive them ; and that God, who with a strong hand delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, can deliver the people of this land from the hardships under which you make them groan. You suppose, perhaps, that, from a fond attachment to their native country, they will still continue to toil and starve, as most of them have hitherto done. But the weight of oppression must overbalance that attachment ; avarice often defeats its own aim, and in this particular case it must, in the issue, unavoidably have that effect. The farmers are in some sort your property ; for from them your land derives its value ; and whenever you drive away one of them, you thereby diminish your incomes ; and besides, every laborious man is worth a great sum of money to his country. How poor and defenceless will this country be, if, by your covetousness and rigour, it is spoiled of its inhabitants ! The proportion of brave men which this nation furnished to the navy and the army in the late war was high, and is almost incredible. Will such a supply be possible in time of need, if the land shall be depopulated ? You are often complaining that our ministers of state act foolishly, when, at the end of a war, they dismiss so great a number of brave seamen ; all of whom, you say, might be retained in the service, if two or three overgrown pensions were wisely applied to maintain them. Will you ruin your country, by beating time with the awkward and impolitical measures of a covetous and bungling ministry, which you despise and condemn ? It is time, it is high time for you to alter your measures, to cease from oppression, and, if possible, prevent the desolation of the land. Exact not the whole ; nay, abate a great deal of that which your tenants have of late obliged themselves to pay. When you granted them leases, oat-meal was at 15 d. a-peck. It hath since been a third cheaper. Can you in conscience exact all that which they have foolishly obliged themselves

to pay ? Think on justice and equity, and you will be moved by the fear of a righteous God, and by a regard to your own interest, to abate a great part of what you can in rigour demand. Restore to their possessions those whom you have ejected, and restore them on equitable terms. Let me address you in the words of Nehemiah, which were immediately complied with ; “ Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vine-yards, their olive-yards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that you exact of them. And they said, We will restore, and require nothing of them.” Make some provision for the many distressed families, whose vitals you have sucked and left them to starve. Restore the pledge, and give again that ye had robbed. Parcel out your waste grounds to sober and industrious families, and encourage them to abide with you : “ And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by.” Instead of enriching yourselves by grinding the faces of the poor, pity them, relieve them ; for “ He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him who will pity the poor.” Can any of you have greater pleasure in life, than to behold a number of poor families brought from distress into comfortable circumstances by your means ? Is there any character more noble, than that of such a compassionate and humane man ? Is there any more respectable in youth, or in old age ? “ Behold,” says Samuel, “ I am old and grey-headed, and I have walked before you from my childhood to this day. Behold, here I am, witness against me before the Lord. Whose ox have I taken ? or whose ass have I taken ? whom have I defrauded ? whom have I oppressed ? or of whose hand have I received any bribe ?” I hope, that though inhumanity and extortion have become so fashionable, there are still many of you who esteem

such a character, and some of you who strive to deserve it: These last will be beloved and esteemed while they are alive, and their memory will be precious and revered. In the mean time, they will have peace from within, and security from without: For “He that walketh righteously—he that despiseth the gain of oppression, and shaketh his hand from holding of bribes—he shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks—bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure.”

Allow me also to address myself to you who make the bulk of this assembly. Many of you are in worldly distress; strive to make your peace with God, and no misery shall pursue you beyond the grave. No task-master can disturb that peaceful mansion; for “there the wicked cease from troubling; there the weary are at rest; there the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.” You are blamed for being lazy and idle; and I fear some of you are blame-worthy. You know that it is the lot of man to eat his bread with the sweat of his brows, and that idleness leads to almost every sin. Pray, read the word of God, and sanctify the Sabbath; and remember, that to work and provide for your families is an essential part of religion. God manifests himself to those who are diligent about their lawful business. It was when Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law at Horeb, that God appeared to him in the burning bush, and promised to deliver the Israelites, in the words of the text. It was when Gideon was threshing wheat by the wine-press, that an angel appeared to him, and promised a like deliverance. And an angel, with the glad tidings of great joy, came upon the shepherds at Bethlehem, whilst they were keeping watch over their flocks by night. You who have yet farms to cultivate, work with your hands, and strive to attain skill in your business; and “your God will instruct you to discretion, and teach

you." There are many of you who have no farms ; and there are abundance of farms publicly offered to be let ; and the proprietors of them are no doubt expecting to ensnare you as before. Pause and consider how to act. If you could mortify your vanity, and apply to some other business for a few years, you would certainly bring the most avaricious task-masters to reason, and get farms at an equitable rate. Take care that you act not foolishly, as many of you have formerly done. Do not give sport to your oppressors, by making high offers against one another. Take not farms at a rent which you will never be able to pay, lest you bring yourselves into circumstances still more calamitous than those you are in at present. But whether you have farms, or have been driven out of them, I beseech you, that from the fear of God and regard to your immortal souls, you violate not the eternal laws of truth and justice. Sore oppression may seem to make some apology for falsehood and injustice in the sight of men, but nothing can excuse it in the sight of God. Though you should be unmercifully stripped of any small pittance you have, and forced to beg from door to door, leading your infants in your hands, or carrying them in your arms, yet hold fast your integrity, and refuse to let it go. A man oppressed and impoverished, and yet just and honest, is a respectable character. Act with such uprightness, that you may be able to appeal to God in the words of his ancient church : " All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way ; though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death." I do not advise you to abide content, or to abide at all in a state of oppression ; I think you ought to look about for the means of being delivered from it ; you should cry to God for deliverance. When the Israelites cried to

God by reason of their task-masters, God saw their affliction, and heard their cry. I proceed to the next head of discourse, which is to show,

4. That it is the duty and consolation of an afflicted people to cry unto God.

Prayer is the duty of men at all times, especially in a time of distress: Affliction should bring men to God; it ever had, and ever will have, this effect upon the faithful; and when they cry to God, they are comforted. This is manifest from the history of saints in holy scripture; it is manifest also from the experience of every devout man. When the righteous cry to God in faith, he either makes affliction to sit light upon them, or else comes to deliver them from it. When the Israelites "sighed and cried by reason of their bondage, God heard their groaning, and remembered his covenant." And I may here take notice, that the Israelites in Egypt cried to God, because he had given them particular ground to expect deliverance. Good old Jacob had, in his last moments, assured them of it: "Behold," says he, "I die; but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers." Also the patriarch Joseph had said unto them, "I die; and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land." It was faith, founded on these assurances, that disposed the Israelites to cry to God in hope of deliverance. You, my friends, who complain of being in grievous distress, you have no particular prediction from heaven; nor can you hope, like the Israelites, to be delivered in a miraculous manner; but you have numberless promises of the faithful God, that he "will deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their prayer. I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow." And in the words of the text, "I have surely seen the afflic-

tion of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters; for I know their sorrows."

But when you cry to God in behalf of yourselves, you ought also to pray for those who by rigorous demands are the cause of the hardships you suffer: Your hardships, if you have faith in Christ, will at farthest end with your lives; but their sufferings, without repentance and restitution, will but begin at death, and will, alas! have no end. Oppression is one of the most heinous sins; the dreadful curses of Almighty God are denounced against it. So far from returning evil for evil, even in thought, pray for those whom you look upon as chargeable with it; they have no pity on you or on themselves, and are really in a deplorable and pitiable state: Pray that God may alarm their consciences, and open their eyes to see the horrible guilt of inhumanity, avarice, and cruelty. Whatever they have done, or are doing towards you, act not only justly, but like Christians towards them. The command of him, by whose atonement you hope to be saved in the great day of God, is, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

I will only add on this head, that when you cry to God for deliverance, you ought to pray to him, that you may be enabled to discern the means of being delivered: The means of relief may be very perceivable, and yet not perceived by you. There are few people in straitening circumstances who might not better their condition, could they exert that activity, and exercise that reason which God hath given them. Indeed, when a people have been long enslaved and continually occupied in hard labour, it commonly

happens, that their understanding is impaired in proportion as their bodily strength is worn out by the drudgery they have undergone. Every body except themselves sees how in all probability they might easily emerge out of the miserable condition in which they are. You have been and you are in distress; you have need to pray to God that he would enlighten you to discern the means of being rescued from it. Pray to him "who relieves the oppressed, and gives food to the hungry; who opens the eyes of the blind, and raiseth them that are bowed down;" that he may open your eyes to discern the proper means, the path in which you should go and run to escape the rod of oppression. The path may be plain and wide, but you will not see it till God shall be pleased to open your eyes. When the cottage of Elisha was surrounded by the Syrian army, the prophet's servant could not see the armies which heaven had sent for his protection, till his eyes were opened. When Hagar and her child were dying of thirst, she could not see the well of water that was just before her, till God had opened her eyes. In the next head of discourse,

5. I am to show, That as the Israelites were delivered out of the house of bondage by the arm of God, so the people who are oppressed in this land have, by divine providence, an effectual means of being delivered from the hardships they groan under. "I am come down," God says in the text, "to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of that land unto a good land and a large, a land flowing with milk and honey."

God promised deliverance to his people, and by an outstretched arm he made his promise good. Now we are not to expect miracles, and prophecy hath ceased; you will hear no voice from Heaven, telling you where to fly from the hardships you complain of: But God speaks to you by facts, by the visible course

of his providential administration: And, humanly speaking, you have just now a surer prospect of effectual and speedy relief than the Israelites had when Moses called upon them to leave Egypt: The relief I mean is in the wide and pleasant fields of North America, lately added and secured to the dominions of our mild and gracious sovereign. And dare any man say that such a large accession of territory to the empire of Britain hath not been purposely provided by divine providence to afford a comfortable habitation to those who are so ill used and so much borne down in this country? It was when the Israelites were compelled to make brick without straw, that the cup of the Amorites began to be full: It was when the rate of land in this country was rising so high that laborious farmers could not live by it, that the God of war and peace provided abundance of room for them in a different part of the world.

And every one who carefully reads the-holy scripture, or takes notice of the ordinary dispensations of providence, will observe, that oftentimes, when either individual persons; or a whole people, have been brought into distress, there is provision made for their escape, and “a great door, and effectual, is opened” unto them. When a people are in this condition, and like the Israelites cry for relief, God hath pity on them. “Behold,” says he, “I am come down to deliver them.”—“Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her: and I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.”

I am very sensible, that, from that fond attachment most of you have to the place you know or were born in, you may think the relief I mention is hardly any relief at all. Some of you have never been twenty miles from where you were born, and you derive

small comfort from the thought of going to so distant a country; notwithstanding all your misery, you have little inclination to leave the scene of it, and imagine it is an irksome thing to remove so far. And I confess, that when a few only remove at a time, there is something irksome in it; but when a great number of families, or the inhabitants of a country-side, lift themselves as it were at once, and remove together in company, there is nothing irksome in it at all. They embark in the same vessels; they sail away and solace one another in the voyage; they reach the peaceful shore together; they set themselves down in their new habitations, and live in neighbourhood just as before. Such emigrations or removals of a whole people from one land to another, have nothing disagreeable in them; they were frequent in former ages, and not long ago we have instances of them. When a country is overstocked with inhabitants, so that the land is not able to maintain them, it becomes necessary for them to seek out new dwellings: when a people are under tyranny and religious persecution, it is natural for them to fly away to another land. To this cause the most industrious and flourishing of the British colonies owed its origin and increase; to this also we owe the woollen manufacture. When the industrious manufacturers were persecuted in the low countries, they fled for refuge to this island, and established that manufacture, which hath since been pursued with so much advantage to this kingdom. This land is neither overstocked with inhabitants, nor can you justly complain of civil tyranny or religious persecution; and yet you are in very deplorable circumstances. You are not tyrannised over by the sovereign, but by a set of petty tyrants; and your misery is the more grievous, as it is brought upon you by persons who are all of them covetous, many of them possessed of little merit, and who most of them have not a greater share of understanding than you

have yourselves. Through their insatiable avarice, encouraged by your folly, they have raised the rent of land to so enormous a height, that, by the severest toil and the most pinching frugality, you cannot, in this land, procure even a scrimp subsistence. I behold your misery in your very countenances, and you feel, you bitterly feel, the truth of what I have said.

An emigration, therefore, seems necessary: It is, I think, the only expedient by which you can be effectually rescued from misery, and get beyond the reach of those oppressors, who, without relenting or discovering as yet any signs of remorse, have inhumanly seized upon your all, and reduced you to beggary. Your distress is real, and God hath heard your cry: "Your cry hath come up to God by reason of your bondage, and he hath heard your groaning. I am come down," says he, "to deliver my people out of this land, and to bring them into a good land and a large." He hath provided room for you, and a wide door for your escape; and I am still persuaded, that whoever of you considers the doings of the Lord, and reads attentively the book of providence, will be filled with joy and wonder, that against the time of your distress so ample a provision is made for your relief: For, in effect, God is, by his providence, saying to you, "I will appoint a place for my people, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as before-time." Your brethren abroad are calling upon you, "Arise, for we have seen the land, and behold it is very good; and are ye still? Be not slothful to enter and possess the land. When ye go, ye shall come to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth."

As by your manner of life and your constant drudgery, you have had little curiosity, and indeed no time to inform yourselves about the nature of distant coun-

tries, I will, for your information, mention a few particulars, which may tend to convince you, that the means of relief which providence puts in your power is both safe, and will be effectual.—For, in the first place,

1. The lands in North America, of which I speak, are part of the British empire, and the inhabitants are the subjects of our illustrious sovereign King George. When you are feeling the severity of high exactions, I doubt not but many of you may be disposed to steal away, and seek for shelter even in the territories of some foreign prince, who may be the rival or the natural enemy of your country; for nobody can tell what the force of oppression may tempt men to do. When they are brutally used by those whose interest it is to use them well, by those whom by hard labour they support in elegance and ease, they may be tempted to throw themselves into circumstances that are dubious, and even desperate. If they are not totally dispirited by long oppression, they feel indignation at their oppressors; and imagining it can hardly be worse with them than it is at present, they strive at any rate to get out of misery, though death itself should be the consequence. They think like the four leprous men at the gate of Samaria, in a time of famine; “They said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come and let us fall into the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.” But you ought to suffer very much before you even think of becoming the subjects of another prince; it is a means of relief which no man who regards the laws of his country will dare to justify. But to go from this to America is as safe in the eye of the law, as it is to leave one parish and go to dwell in another. When you have gone there, you are Britons as much

as you are at present. It is true, that by emigrating there, you weaken this part of the country, at least for some time; but you do not weaken the British empire; on the contrary, you strengthen it. The land that is now uncultivated will become as the garden of Eden; marriage will be honourable; the number of industrious hands will speedily multiply; and you will be a people as the stars of heaven, that cannot be numbered. You continue to be subjects of the same king, governed by the present laws, or laws to be afterwards made with your own consent; and when called upon you will be ready to defend the rights of Britain.

2. The land which God in his providence hath provided for you is fertile; it is a good land. There are indeed large tracks of ground belonging to our king in the far northern parts of America, concerning which this cannot altogether be affirmed; I mean Newfoundland, and perhaps some parts of Nova Scotia: But the land I speak of, and which is ready to receive you, is on the back of the flourishing and extensive colony of Virginia, and along the banks of the Ohio. There may be places where one might be safe enough from oppression, and which may be tolerably fertile too; but by the want of water, or the unwholesomeness of the climate, (such as was that of Darien) it is not desirable to live in them. But in this good land, though still in its natural state, the soil is fertile; the climate is mild; the air serene; the heat not sultry in summer, nor the cold excessive in winter; the prospect of the hills delightful; and the valleys plentifully watered with crystal streams descending from the upper grounds. But rest not with the few hints which I am hastily throwing out; ask those who know and have seen the land: They will show you the fruit of it; they will tell you, in the language of the spies whom Moses sent to inspect the land of Canaan: They said, "We came unto the land whither thou sentest us,

and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. The land we passed through to search it is an exceeding good land." Nay, I am perfectly sure, that the clearer information you get concerning it, the more you will be convinced that the land is fertile and desirable; so that I may apply to this land what Moses said of Canaan, and understand his expressions in the fullest sense: "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil-olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass."

3. The continent of North America, now the property of Great Britain, is large: "I am come," as it is in the text, "to bring you into a good land and a large." Was it only some narrow province, though ever so good, the thought of going to it would yield little comfort to so great numbers as are here oppressed, because it could bring relief but to a few: But as it is fruitful, it is also large, and almost unbounded, extending from the British settlements on the sea-coast (which reach along the shore 2000 miles), westward to these immense rivers Mississippi and Saint Lawrence; a country large in a literal sense, fifty or an hundred times as large as that which is spoken of in the text; a country which is able to accommodate twenty times as many people as are at this day in Scotland. Here, for many years past, it would almost seem there was not room for men of your laborious occupation; for whenever a farm was to be let, there were many of you in competition, jostling against one another to get into it; and this practice many of you followed, till you ruined yourselves by it. But there there can be no such competition; the land is large.

and it is all before you. Though all of you, though many hundred thousands should go and dwell in it, there is ample room and accommodation for you. The land indeed, though fruitful and large, is uncultivated; there are trees to be grubbed out, and the soil is to be prepared for the plough. But you did not grudge to labour here, if you could have supported yourselves by it; and there too you must lay your account with labouring assiduously, at least for some years; but then the fruits of your labour will be your own; whereas here you “sowed much, and brought in little” to yourselves; you laboured, and your task-masters reaped the fruits of it.

4. The land in view is cheap, and almost without taxations: Though it be “a good land and a large,” yet if it were dear, if, as your task-masters do here, the king was demanding 30 or 40 shillings for each acre of it, it would afford little relief to you in that severe oppression under which you groan; but it is to be without price or purchase-money, freely and gratuitously made over to the industrious labourer, to be his property and heritage for ever; and only a quit rent of 3 or 4 shillings for each hundred acres of it to be paid to the king: A less rent for an hundred acres of rich ground which is your own for ever, than your present task-masters demand for half an acre of bog or barren rock. Here, if any of your rank, after the fatigue of labour, chooseth to amuse himself with fishing, or fowling, or the chase, he is liable to all the penalties of a severe game-act; but there, you will be under no such slavish restraint. In the woods of America, as there is plenty of game, so you may, as often as you please, amuse yourselves in catching it, without any danger of being robbed of your fowling-pieces, or prosecuted as poachers. Here, when one employs large fields in pasture, he depopulates the country, because a few people only are needed to take care of the cattle; but there, if any of you have

a desire to see large flocks of his own feeding on rich and extensive pastures, he may, with profit to himself, and without detriment to the public, gratify that natural desire. As the Israelites did, "you will find fat pasture and good, and the land wide, and quiet, and peaceable." You may behold your flocks and herds grazing at their ease on green pastures, and may be innocently entertained with "the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen."

There are two things which render the high rent of land in this country more intolerable than it would be otherwise. One of them is, the high taxes which every person is obliged to pay to defray the expence of government, and to make good that enormous debt with which the ministry from time to time have loaded the nation. You can hardly conceive how great a proportion of the fruit of your labour every one of you pays yearly by the impositions that are laid on houses, windows, soap, salt, drink, candles, shoes, and every thing you need. The other thing is, the maintenance of the numerous poor, many of whom have been reduced to beggary by the rapacity of the landholders; and the burden of supporting them falls, as I have shown, upon the farmers and tradesmen. On account of these two things, the less rent should have been exacted; but these things have never been considered. The tenants have heavy taxes to pay to the public, and the landholders leave it to them to maintain the poor. But from both these grievances the inhabitants of America are almost totally exempted. The public taxes are a very trifle; and in the British settlements which have been already made there, there is scarce a single beggar to be seen, or indeed any who need to beg. The land is good, and it is cheap.

5. But farther: North America is a land of civil and religious liberty: Without this, though recommended by all the real advantages I have mentioned,

it would not be a desirable habitation for even an oppressed people. If despotic power prevailed in America, poor would be the encouragement derived from its mild climate, its rich pastures, and its fruitful plains : But in North America, liberty in the largest sense is established according to the generous principles of the law of England : The lives and property of even the poorest men are there secure. Here indeed you have little property, and what you have would be more secure, if, as in England, and according to the ancient law of Scotland, juries were used in all civil causes : And as you have felt the avarice of your great task-masters, the time shall ever come, when in criminal trials, especially when any of you is prosecuted by the rich or noble, you shall also feel their weight and influence to get jurymen appointed to try you, who are known to be prejudiced against you, or to overawe these jurymen after they have been appointed : Then, if there be not room elsewhere, it will be high time for you to fly for your lives to England, though that glorious land of liberty should be ever so much crowded with inhabitants. But, by the providence of God, there is room for you where these same English laws, esteemed to be the perfection of human reason, are the very laws by which your lives and properties are to be judged, civil causes speedily and fairly determined by the help of a jury, and criminal trials by the unanimous verdict of an unbiassed jury, and the sentence of an enlightened, candid, and merciful judge.

Liberty, the natural right of mankind, and the glory of England, was restored and established by the great King William of immortal memory ; it was farther secured by the happy accession of the illustrious George I. to the imperial crown of these kingdoms ; and from the mother-country it is derived to its several colonies. The rights, the privileges, the laws of the mother-country and the colonies are the

same: Hence it is, that there as well as here no man's property, or personal freedom, or life, is at the arbitrary disposal of any single person or governor; he is subject only to the laws; he is to be judged by the laws alone: Hence it is, that by charters granted to the colonies by the crown, and some of them several times renewed, no man is to be taxed but with his own consent, or the consent of his representative in a lawful assembly. It is by this liberty that the British colonies have so wonderfully flourished; and our parliament is too wise not to see that the same liberty is necessary to encourage those settlements which are yet to be made on such an extensive vacant territory. Without this, the present colonies would dwindle to ruin, and any new settlement would be crushed in its infancy. We have indeed, for some time past, been hearing a voice or cry from North America, that its liberties, solemnly secured by charters, are like to be infringed; that some wrong-headed statesmen have been pursuing measures detrimental to the mother-country, and destructive to the colonies; and that it could not have been foreseen, that ever the British ministry would be so ignorant or despotic as to think of such ruinous laws with respect to America as in fact they have lately enacted. But that is no more but a temporary evil: When these statesmen "come to themselves," and their "understanding returns to them," they will see it to be just, and wise, and necessary, to alter and reverse their measures, or the king will frown upon them, and command them to desist. The voice is the voice of liberty; it is manly and loud; it ought to be heard; and it must prevail.

And as the natural advantages of North America are enhanced by the invaluable blessing of civil liberty, so religious liberty is also established there. Persecution is indeed a very dreadful thing, and as impolitical as it is dreadful and wicked. Every man

hath a right to worship God according to the light of his own conscience; for the conscience is God's, and in this respect he is subject to God alone. You, blessed be God, have from your youth been instructed in the true faith of Christ; and I hope there are many of you of whom religion hath taken so fast a hold, that it can never be torn from you, for you count it dearer to you than your lives; and it is no wonder, for it hath been your consolation under these great straits and difficulties into which rapacious men have brought you. There is nothing that can disturb you in the profession and exercise of it in that good land which God in his providence hath prepared for your relief. That same religion which hath supported you in the time of your distress will be your delight in your more easy and prosperous days: It hath been your comfort under a train of unmerited hardships in this land; it will be your joy in that land where God shall have "turned your captivity," and blessed your latter end "more than your beginning."

When I am speaking of religion, I find my heart warms in the hopeful prospect of its advancement. I know, that some of you have just views of the gospel, and a laudable zeal for the interest of Christ's kingdom. I think of the fulfilment of the promises of the faithful God, "That he will give his Son the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for a possession; that all the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him; that the glorious Redeemer shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth; and that men shall fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising sun." I am hoping that you, driven by oppression from this country, may be the means under God to enlarge the boundaries of the Mediator's kingdom. I cannot but

have some hope, that you, by settling in America, may be of great use to propagate the gospel among the poor Indians; a people plain, and uncorrupted by luxury or false refinement, and whom bad usage alone hath sometimes spurred on to acts of cruelty. If you have intercourse with them, and use them well, they will be your fast friends; and by means of that intercourse and friendship, you may be the happy instruments, in the hand of providence, of bringing them to embrace the faith of Christ. There have been attempts made to enlighten and convert that people; I will not say with what political views they were set on foot at home; and I am ashamed to speak or think of the temper and behaviour of those who have been sent abroad to execute them. Is it to be expected, that the wild Indians, who, like other men, have reason, and a sense of right and wrong; is it to be expected, that they will embrace a religion, when they see its professors to be openly debauched and profane, and find them to be, in their transactions, faithless, rapacious, and cruel? You do not know what great effect your sincere endeavours, joined with your good conversation, may produce. All that you have suffered may have been for good. God makes the wickedness of men subservient to the purposes of his adorable providence. Joseph's brethren sold him into Egypt; but "God sent him before them to save their lives by a great deliverance." Your being oppressed here makes you think of going elsewhere; and very probably your removing to North America may be a link in the great chain of providence for erecting the church of God in that part of the world, and to save the perishing souls of men by a great salvation. How joyful the thought! It may be that which is intended by the sounding of the seventh angel: "There were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall

reign for ever and ever. Sing then, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, strengthen thy stakes."—"The Lord shall be known in Egypt; Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands to God; the Gentiles shall come to his light, and the isles shall wait for him."

When one considers the impiety, venality, and oppression, that prevail in this country, and the little sense men have of liberty and religion, he is tempted to think that we are on the eve of some mighty revolution. Alas! is it not to be feared, that God may be provoked to remove our candlestick out of its place, and to give the gospel to a people who will bring forth the fruits of it? or that religion is wearing to an end? But the church of Christ is founded upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it; and it is some consolation to think, that religion, so much despised in this country, may be esteemed in North America, and practised by our countrymen and the Indians in that new world. If such a glorious blessing shall be enlarged and spread abroad, in consequence of your having been oppressed, you need not grudge at what you have suffered.

6. You may esteem America to be the more desirable a retreat from your oppression, because, in all probability, it will in a course of years become the seat of the British government. I will not here mention what hath been observed by historians, that the seat of empire hath, from the most ancient times, travelled from east to west; nor will I say any thing about the great changes that have been made in the system of Europe by the discovery and plantation of the western world. Politicians have laid it down as

a certain maxim, that whatever European kingdom hath the property and possession of North America, it must also, by its trade and the strength of its navy, have the empire of the sea, and bear the chief sway in Europe: And I think it is not much less evident, that when a small and a large country, supposed to be but equally good, are under the dominion of the same sovereign, the greater, when once it comes to be sufficiently peopled, must become the residence of the court, and the seat of the civil administration. Britain, though the south part of it at least is abundantly fertile, is of small extent in comparison of the large continent of North America; nor doth America yield to England in the fertility of its soil. So fine a country as North America will in time be peopled: By the number of industrious hands, its power and riches will increase; it will grasp at independency; it is doing so already; and to manage and direct the independent spirit, it may be found proper or necessary that the seat of government be established there. Now, many oppressed people have already gone, and many of you are thinking to go there to be sheltered from domestic oppression. Now, many people go there to reside for a time, with the view of making a fortune and returning to this country; but when America shall become the seat of government, the wealthy people will go there in swarms, as our nobility and gentry do now to England, and none will wish to return. Now, it is reckoned an advantage for a man to be born in Britain rather than in America; but the case will then be reversed, and every man will value himself for being a native of America, and descended from ancestors who had long ago settled there. But the particular event of which I speak may possibly not take place for a considerable course of years, and therefore I lay little or no stress upon it. It remains, however, true, that God hath provided for you "a good land and a

large," a desirable retreat from all your present sufferings and oppression. I add, in the last place,

7. That this land, so good and so large, may be reached in a very short time. Was I speaking to you about rich fields in the eastern parts of Asia, this would avail you nothing; because, though they had all the advantages I have mentioned, it would take a very long time before you could reach them. But I speak to you of a good land, which, though it be distant, you may reach it in the space of four or five weeks, almost as soon as you could travel to the utmost part of this island. It was 40 years before the oppressed Israelites reached the promised land, and in much less than 40 days you may reach the peaceful shore of that good and large country which is prepared for you. Formerly, many people in the inland parts of this country were affrighted to travel by land to any distance, and still more to venture on a voyage at sea. Your forefathers, within these 150 years, did not go to the capital of Britain, or even that of Scotland, without having first made their wills. But among the many advantages we derive from commerce, this is one, that navigation is well understood, and safely practised. Our sea-faring people think nothing of making two or three voyages a year to America. By the expertness in the art of sailing, men can, with great expedition and small expence, be safely transported from one country to another; and even our inland people become less and less afraid of a sea voyage. If you have still some reluctance to venture on the sea, I persuade myself, that the remembrance of your oppression, the feeling of your misery, the despair of bettering your circumstances in this country, and an honest indignation at your oppressors, will overcome that reluctance. You have experience of God's goodness in strengthening you to bear up under great severities and hard labour. While at sea, you will be still under his pro-

tection, and there you will behold his wonders, and be safe in the midst of winds and storms: For "they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep; for he commandeth and raiseth the stormy winds; their soul is melted because of trouble; they reel to and fro, and are at their wits end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distress. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad, because they be quiet; so he bringeth them to their desired haven." You have endeavoured to live by faith, and to serve God with sincerity of heart. You have his promise, that he will be with you, and preserve you in every danger: "Fear not," he says, "for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. Fear not, for I am with thee. I am the Lord, thy God, thy Saviour. I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west."

And as it requires but a few days to sail from our shore to that of North America, so there is nothing that hinders you to embark for that country. Near a century and a half ago, when a headstrong and ill-advised monarch was violating the property and infringing the civil and religious liberties of the kingdom, and some had gone, and great numbers of the best people were desirous to transport themselves to the then wilds of America, where they might enjoy liberty, they were prohibited by the tyrannical edicts of that obstinate and unhappy monarch. Many oppressed people in different dominions and principalities of Germany, have been for some years past transporting themselves in great shoals, to take refuge

in the vacant territories of America belonging to Britain : But these emigrations are now strictly countermanded by these pitiful tyrants, and despotic German sovereigns ; but there is not the least reason to apprehend that such unnatural edicts will ever be issued out by our gracious sovereign, or by the wisdom of the British parliament. I will not say but that those of your task-masters who lately attempted to have the ports shut, when the people were starving, may attempt so inhuman a thing. When they see great numbers of you leaving the country (which, I suppose, will and must be the case), they may at last come to understand, that in proportion as the country is depopulated, their incomes must be diminished ; and may strive to get you imprisoned in this land, to tug like galley-slaves, not for your own, but their private advantage. But there is not the most distant ground to suspect the possibility of their being listened to ; nay, should they stir in it, they would be hissed at and exposed : For if such a motion was made, the commercial part of the legislative body would abhor the cruel and selfish design of it, and crush it with contempt.

I have said, that there neither is, nor can be, any hindrance in your way to fly from your present misery, and that little time and small expence is necessary for your passage : I tell you also, that you have no difficulties to grapple with after you have reached the American shore ; you will be immediately put in possession of a land that is good and large. The Israelites wandered forty years in the wilderness, and were in great difficulties, and forced to encounter with potent enemies in their way to Canaan ; but God in his providence hath been kind to you : There is no hardened Pharaoh to keep you still, no army to pursue you, to kill you, or fetch you back : You have no wilderness of Haran to discourage you ; no fiery serpents to bite and devour you ; no Og king of Ba-

shan, or Sihon king of Hesbon, to fight against you; no giants, or Horims, or Emims, or Zamzummims, to obstruct your journey: Only, if a great number of you go over to the good land at once, it may be proper beforehand to apprise the British ministry of your design, that so some prudent man may be appointed and ready to lay off the townships, and allot to every emigrant his particular possession. They have been proposing to accommodate the poor of England in America, and they will be equally disposed to accommodate the industrious emigrants from this country.

I for my part see nothing which can retard your escape from wretchedness, except, on the one hand, your causeless fears, your indolence, or a baseness of mind, still willing to endure the scourge of oppression; or, on the other hand, the artifices that will be used by your task-masters. If, when God puts a price in your hand to get wisdom, you have no heart to use it; if when, in his providence, he hath prepared an ample relief for you, and you will not take hold of it; there is no help for you; there appears even a necessity that you must continue miserable. I ask you, Do ye discern any other effectual method of relief but that which I have mentioned? You answer, No, by your dismal looks. If then you have been aiming to go far from the scene of your oppression; if, by childish fear, by sloth, by base-mindedness, you are withheld from executing your purpose; if you return again, and put yourselves in the power of your task-masters, you may depend upon it they will take advantage of your weakness, and instead of whips chastise you with scorpions; so that, like the man into whom the unclean spirit returned, your last state will be worse than the first. But in that case, whatever be your sufferings, you ought to be silent, and utter no complaint: Let them intoxicate and hoodwink you when they give you leases; let them seize on your crops without appreciation; let them drive your cat-

tle without form of law, pillage your houses, rouse your clothes, beat and imprison your persons, and turn your children out of doors naked and starving—you should never once be heard to complain. God hath stretched out his hand for your relief, and you did not regard him; he showed you a wide and plain path to fly from misery, and you would not enter into it. But perhaps there are not very many of you who by faint-heartedness will hinder your own deliverance, your escape from the unprofitable toil of making brick without straw. I rather suspect that the hindrance will spring from those who will at last have their eyes opened to see that your departure must lessen their unconscionable revenues. Your task-masters will, by themselves and others, employ every artifice to detain you; they will, I foresee, suborn a number of the cunningest of their tenants, promising them some abatement of their rent, (which promise however they will never fulfil) to discourage and alarm you. These mean and officious substitutes will fawningly come up to you at church or market, and with deep design, but seeming concern for you, tell you of the dangers in crossing the sea, the accidents that may happen, the labour and difficulty of clearing the ground, the savageness of the Indians, and I know not what. They will tell you, that the landlord is sorry upon your account, that he will give you an easier lease, and not exact interest again, if you pay not punctually at the term. I think I see the air of these low persons, the bustle they make to keep you in misery, and hear the falsehoods they utter, to frighten and delude you; but you have understanding as well as they. Can you believe that those who have hitherto used you with so much barbarity are all of a sudden become concerned for your welfare? Do you not see, that it is not you they pity, but themselves, when bereft of the produce of your toil? There may indeed be danger at sea; but is that

danger greater to you than to other people? There may be accidents at sea, but so may there be at land. You are to be in the way of your calling, and God hath promised, that "he will give his angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways." The ground, no doubt, is to be cleared;—and the Indians, if you do not provoke them, will do you no harm. You will easily discern, that these under-agents of oppression are either such as are in arrears with the master, or he hath got them some other way in his clutches, or they expect some favour from him. Whatever they say or promise, act a prudent and a steady part. Be not afraid of vain terrors, nor depend on fallacious promises. They see now what they did not see before, and they are greedy to devour the fruits of your labour. Their case and yours is tolerably well represented in the fable of the crocodiles and dogs in Egypt: "The dogs, afraid of being swallowed up by the crocodiles, used to drink running: A crocodile in the river espying one of them in this timorous plight, said to him, Come lap at your leisure, be not afraid; come nearer, to a better place. So I would, replied the dog, if I did not know beforehand that you are fond of my flesh." You have pitied and bemoaned the distress of one another; continue to be knit together in the bands of love; encourage one another to resolution in pursuing the best scheme of being delivered from misery. Say with the Jews returning to their country, "Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul; be not cut off in her iniquity. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: Forsake her, and let us go every one into our own country. Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans." And you that have skill to lead and direct the rest, "be as the goats before the flocks."—"Go ye forth of Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans; with a voice of singing declare ye, tell this, utter it even:

to the end of the earth: say ye, The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob."

The advantages of living in North America are great and many. The people there are under the auspicious government of George III. The land is good in its quality—large in its extent—cheap and gratuitously bestowed—civil and religious liberty flourish there—and the passage to it is unexpensive, and made in a few weeks. Such advantages might tempt almost any people to go and settle there, though they be under no oppression; but when a people are groaning under oppression, and see that such a land is in providence prepared for them, it becomes their duty to repair to it. And this I shall clearly show in what was proposed to be the last head of this discourse; which is,

6. That it is the duty of an afflicted people to pursue the means which providence offers for their deliverance. It is their duty, because it is just obeying the direction of Christ; "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." When the afflicted Israelites cried for relief, and had seen the wonders God did in Egypt, it was their duty to trust in God, and yield themselves to be conducted by him, though they saw but darkly by what particular method they were to be delivered; and those of them, who, upon the appearance of difficulties, murmured and said, "Let us make us a captain to return again into Egypt," sinned against God, and were punished accordingly. God wills our everlasting happiness, and also our present welfare: It is the duty of men to promote their own interest. I will not absolutely say, that it is the duty of those who are so much oppressed in this country to remove to the fertile and spacious fields of North America; but I do affirm, that it is their duty to examine carefully by what means they may be rescued from misery; and if, after all the inquiry they can make, they are, convinced

that what I speak of is the most safe, and speedy, and effectual means of being delivered from oppression, then, for aught I can see to the contrary, it becomes their duty to lay hold of it; it is the means which their best reason suggests; it is that which God himself points out to them: For his providence hath a language, a language which is oftentimes as intelligible as even a voice from heaven.

I will briefly mention a few plain reasons, which show it to be the duty of a people, in distress, or difficulties, to comply with the means which divine providence points out for their relief. And,

1. This is the duty of such a people, as they would wish to preserve their own lives. God gives them the blessing of life, and will they be at no pains to preserve it? Will a wise man stay in a house when he sees it on fire? Will not a sailor, when the vessel is shipwrecked, try to escape on a plank? Will one continue a Barbary slave, when he can safely make his escape? Or will one abide in the way of robbers, who are ten times stronger than he, when he hath a fair opportunity of running away? If any one acts in that sort, he sins against his own soul; he sins against God, and breaks the sixth commandment.

2. An oppressed people should pursue the means which providence offers for their relief, upon account of their children. It is the duty of parents to provide for their children: But how can they provide for them in a land where they are kept in such difficulties that they cannot provide for themselves? There are several of you now sitting before me, and your children standing at your knees with rags on their backs, and the dismal marks of hunger on their face: Let me ask you, what will become of these poor children when you die? By reason of your task-masters, you have been able to provide nothing for them; and they, alas! cannot yet support themselves. It is easy to see they must beg their bread; but that

would be nothing, were it not the vicious habits of idleness, lying, cursing, swearing, and pilfering, which they will contract by strolling through the country. It is impossible for you not to be concerned about the dangers they run with respect to their character, their virtue, their happiness in this life, and the state of their immortal souls in the life to come. It is no wonder you wish to prevent all that danger; and if God puts it in your power, a concern for these children should rouse you to activity, that you may leave them in a hopeful way.

3. I think it is the duty of a number of you at least, to repair to the good and large land which is ready to receive you, from compassion to those whom you leave behind you. This is just doing what good Abraham did with respect to Lot. When there was a strife between the herdsmen of Abram's cattle and the herdsmen of Lot's cattle, "Abram said to Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." There hath been too much strife among you about who should possess this or that spot of ground. I do not expect, that compassion or regard to the welfare of your neighbours is to operate very high in this selfish age: But if many of you are distressed; if through the avarice of your task-masters and your own weakness there is reason to believe that your distress must continue and increase whilst you stay here; if you plainly discern, that whatever number shall incline to go may be very happy elsewhere, I think you need not grudge, I hope you will rather rejoice, that those of your occupation, whom you leave behind you, shall be happier than they are at present, and rendered happier by your means; and I cannot help thinking but that this is your duty.

4. It appears to me, that it is your duty to withdraw yourselves, out of pity to those who have so cruelly oppressed you. Grievous and multiplied is the misery which, by their rapacity, they have occasioned; and dreadful is the account which they have to make. The aged men whom they have barbarously ejected—the widows whose poor houses they have pillaged—the children whom by cold and hunger they have starved to a premature death—and even the prostitute instruments of their oppression—will appear as witnesses against them in the great day of God. You, at least some of you, have by your folly been in some degree partners with them in their guilt, and you have had sufficient cause to repent of that sin and folly: But can you, even with the eyes of charity, discern any marks of repentance in them, any relenting or remorse, any inclination to make restitution to those whom they have ruined? Do they not, without being disturbed, behold the dismal sight of naked orphans, whose parents they have imprisoned, and made to die in want? Do they not hear the rueful cries of desolated families, and yet continue inexorable, and altogether impenitent? Some of you, exasperated by oppression, may be thinking it but just, that they who by rapacity have caused so much misery to others, should be rendered miserable in their turn. But you ought to do every thing in your power to bring them, if possible, to repentance, and prevent their eternal damnation; and to this purpose, I can see nothing so effectual as your removing out of the country. Most of them are just as rapacious as they can find opportunity to be so; but then they will want the opportunity. By your withdrawing, you will take away occasion from those that desire occasion: The cruel and avaricious temper, a part of their natural corruption, strengthened by long habit, may continue strong for a long time; but wanting fuel to cherish it, or not being exerted as before, it may lan-

guish, and change at last to something better. That God, who works wonders, may in time bring them to some degree of repentance, and to promote so wonderful and so good an end. There are many people in so deplorable circumstances, that they have not even wherewithal to pay their passage: These being left in this land, the sight of them may at last smite the consciences of those who first stripped them of all their substance, and make them to be alarmed at the dreadful and eternal torments which await oppressors in the life to come.

5. You ought to pursue the best means which providence puts in your power to be delivered out of oppression, from a regard to your own immortal souls: This is your great concern; and I appeal to yourselves, that hitherto many of you have been very little concerned about it: And the cause you assign for this indolence is, your distressing circumstances. When I ask you, why you come not to church? you tell me, that you are so fatigued through the week, that you must have rest on the Sunday: When in private I advise you not to sleep in the church, you tell me again of your labour and toil: When I have meetings for catechising, some of you who attend discover an amazing ignorance of plain things concerning the faith and duties of Christians; and I have reason to suspect, that those of you who do not attend are still more ignorant. Still the excuse you make is, that you are so occupied, not in providing or laying up something for your families, but to answer the demands of your rigid task-masters, that you have neither ability nor time to think of religion. If it be so (and with respect to many of you I know it is so), surely it is your duty to strive to be in circumstances more favourable for advancing the happiness of your immortal souls: "What is a man profited," says our Saviour, "if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" And what a comfortless state is

a man in here, who is gaining nothing at all, and in the greatest danger of losing his soul! Surely God Almighty never intended that any of his rational offspring should be all their lives in miserable toil and drudgery, and gain nothing to themselves, nor have any time to think of eternity. You should therefore be alarmed, and stirred up to activity: You should examine and inquire what is the best means that providence offers for your deliverance: You should strive to escape your present oppression, that you may “escape the wrath that is to come.”

Thus it appears to be the duty of an oppressed people to improve the means which providence offers for their deliverance. They should act so, in obedience to the express command of God, and the eternal law of self-preservation; from a regard to their children; from compassion to their fellow sufferers; and to those who oppress them; and a regard to their precious and immortal souls.

I have now finished what I proposed. I have shown, that the rate of land in this country is by far too high—have mentioned the causes and means by which it hath been screwed up to such a height—have shown what effects this high rate of lands doth and must produce—that it is the duty of an afflicted people to cry unto God—that as the Israelites were delivered out of Egypt by the arm of God, so the people who are oppressed in this land have, by divine providence, an effectual means of being delivered from the oppression they groan under—and that it is the duty of an oppressed people to pursue the means which providence points out for their deliverance.

I am either deceived, or you have listened to me with rather more attention than you did to some of the discourses which I formerly delivered to you. I shall be sorry if this discourse have no greater effect than most other sermons. I will rejoice if it shall in

any degree be a means to check the progress of oppression, to cherish the principles of humanity and justice, to contribute to your present comfort and relief, and the salvation of your souls.

I think I see some task-masters at this unusual sermon besides those who were here in the forenoon. If the doctrine you have heard appears strange, or if you think it worth your while, I shall be content that you repeat it to your friends who are engaged in the same measures with yourselves; and though I have little hopes to prevail, I cannot restrain myself from saying a few things more to you: "Your treading is upon the poor, and you lay yourselves down on clothes laid to pledge; for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock. Ye have sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; ye put after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor. There is a fatal conspiracy among you to use oppression, to exercise robbery, to vex the poor and the needy, like wolves ravening the prey, to destroy souls, and get dishonest gain." It is thus the spirit of God speaks to you, and such as you. In whatever view you consider what you are doing, you have no cause to applaud yourselves for your wisdom or your virtue. If you consider it as it must affect your temporal interest, and in a political view, why, you have, by your extortion, driven away a great number of useful hands, and it is almost certain, that incomparably greater numbers must soon follow them. If you consider your measures in a moral view, you have over-reached the poor, you have taken advantage of their rashness and folly, and you rigorously exact what you must know they are unable to pay. Without emotion, you see their deplorable circumstances; without pity, you hear their lamentable cries, cries which might pierce a stone: But God is angry with you; and the time comes, when "the stone shall cry out

of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it," condemning your avarice and cruelty. If you consider your practice as it affects your character while you are alive, and after your death; it blackens, it blasts your reputation; it draws upon you the public odium, and the curse of the poor; and your memory will stink, and be detestable when you are gone. If you consider your extortion as it will (without repentance) affect you in another world—ah! I must stop short—I tremble to speak what I cannot but think. There seems to be a curse on your dishonest gain. I do not hear that many of you are grown richer by your high exactions; there are now as many of your estates at market as perhaps at any time past: "Ye have sold the poor, and not enriched yourselves by their price. What fruit then had you in those things whereof you should be ashamed," and feel remorse? and "the end of them is death." If you would act justly by your poor tenants, and your own poor souls, and prevent in some degree the desolation of the country, there must be a speedy and total alteration of your temper and practices; reject the counsel of your rapacious advisers; exact no more of your tenants but what is reasonable; abate at least the third of all the leases you have let within these seven years past; cherish your tenants; instruct them; make immediate reparation to those whom you have most grievously oppressed; reduce your expence in idle horses, equipage, furniture, dress, and costly entertainments; in most of which articles, especially in the last, you consult no principle but your vanity. Your Saviour hath commanded, that when you make a feast, you should call the poor, because they cannot recompense you; but you reverse his rule, and like chiefly to entertain those who in return will entertain you as well as you have done them. It is certainly a more manly pleasure to see your tenants living in tolerable ease, than to see a number

of persons intoxicated at your tables, who, the most of them at least, even whilst they are sober, cannot say a single word either to instruct your mind or improve your heart. Acquaint yourselves with the nature and value of your estates, and the industry and circumstances of your tenants: "Be thou diligent," says Solomon, "to know the state of thy flocks, and look well to thy herds." It is a pity that many great landholders know nothing of their affairs but by the report of their factors or stewards. These are the chief nuisance of this oppressed country; these are the men who commit such acts of cruelty as, from what I know of the humanity of at least some of you, you would never allow, did you see them or know of them; these are a generation of men, who in every age have been task-masters to the tenants, have defrauded the masters, and oftentimes wormed them out, and perfidiously obtained the estates to themselves; and I doubt not but there are many of them who now appear fierce for your interest, who are cunningly undermining you, and will, in a course of years, be the absolute proprietors of those very estates where now they serve as factors. "Woe to thee, O land," it is said, "when thy king is a child!" and woe also to that estate, woe to those poor tenants, whose master knows nothing of their condition, but by the report of a base-minded, cunning, and rapacious factor! That estate will change its master, and the tenants be ruined or forced to remove. I have said more than perhaps you will thank me for; but I have said it from a sincere regard to your present interest and your future happiness.

I will also offer a few further directions to you whom I behold in such dejection and misery before me.—And let me still urge you to awake from that stupor which is occasioned by oppression, to mind religion and the interest of your immortal souls. However heavy and continued your affliction is, it ought

to seem to you light, and for a moment, if it work for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Amidst your present deliberations, apply to God, and he will direct you what steps you ought to take. You are in great hardships at present; you see relief; consider how wise men should act. I know several of you, who, notwithstanding all that you have yet suffered, are not destitute of knowledge, and who have your minds surprisingly enlarged, in comparison of your betters, who waste their time in an insipid round of eating, and drinking, and gaming, and sleeping, and poring on schemes of oppression. You can lay together and weigh the importance of those motives which ought to influence and determine reasonable men; and, in truth, the wisdom and spirit of a man are never so conspicuous as when it appears that he hath sense and resolution to extricate himself out of difficulties into which he hath been brought by his own folly or the wickedness of others. Will you suffer yourselves to be terrified, and hoodwinked, and imposed upon by those who in fact have less understanding than yourselves? What is there to alarm you in a sea-voyage? or what should scare you to live in a distant part of the world? At sea, and on any part of the earth, you are still in the paternal arms of that God who hath preserved you in soundness of body and mind under that merciless treatment you have met with. God offers ease and happiness to man; but man can have no happiness without exerting his activity, and pursuing the means which indulgent providence puts in his power: And can I doubt that many of you, nobly determined by a prudent concern for your ease, for your souls, for your children, will fly from oppression, and listen to the calls of a merciful God?

But I see a number of you before me who are bended down with years, who have grown grey-headed under oppression, and have provided nothing for

old age; all the profit of your fore labour hath been seized upon by your covetous and cruel task-masters. Alas! you cannot go away; you cannot even have the consolation which Moses had, of seeing at a distance the good and large land which God is giving to your children; you must leave your bones in this land, to be trampled upon by those who have trampled upon you whilst you were in the vigour of life. And though you meet with no mercy or relief from your cruel oppressors, you will, while in life, be pitted and relieved by those of your own station who are not yet totally reduced to want. But I think I hear such old men saying, as Barzillai did to David, "I am fourscore years old, how long have I to live? Why should I pass over this Jordan? Let me die here, and be buried by the grave of my father; but let my son pass over," and not be oppressed as I have been.

I see another class of you before me, whom, by the rigour and continuance of your slavery, I suspect to be more timid than old age itself: You have suffered a miserable bondage and slavery, and seem at last to have no horror at slavery. When you see a method of being asserted into liberty, you are intimidated with vain fears, and think there is a lion in the way. You, I suspect, are determined to stay still, let your task-masters squeeze, and scourge, and beat you as they please. I know not what to say to you. Let me give you a single advice. Be not hasty to get into farms; maintain yourselves by service, or some other way, for a while; look about you for two or three years. There hath been a competition on the side of the farmers alone for many years past: If you wait some years, there will be a competition on the side of the landholders; eager to get tenants, they will strive which of them shall let their land cheapest; and thus, by standing off a while, you will bring them to reason. There are many of you now before me, who, if you had got this advice seven years ago, and pur-

fued it, would, I am fure, have been in better circumftances at prefent, and not have feen your families in mifery, nor felt that diftreff which you now feel. In one word, be fure to love your oppreffors. This you fay is difficult, as there is nothing amiable in their temper or praftice, and almoft every thing that is odious and rebuting. I confeff the duty is difficult, but ftill it is duty. You ought furely to forgive, to pity, to pray for them. Pray to God, that he may enlighten their great darknefs, and create remorse in their hardened fouls; that he may give them contrition, bring them to repentance and to make reftitution. Pray that he may open their eyes, “that they may fee that they themfelves are beafts;” if peradventure “the thoughts of their hearts,” and the cruel aétions of their lives, “may be forgiven them.” Pray God that he may give all of you underftanding in all things, and that wifdom which is profitable to direct.

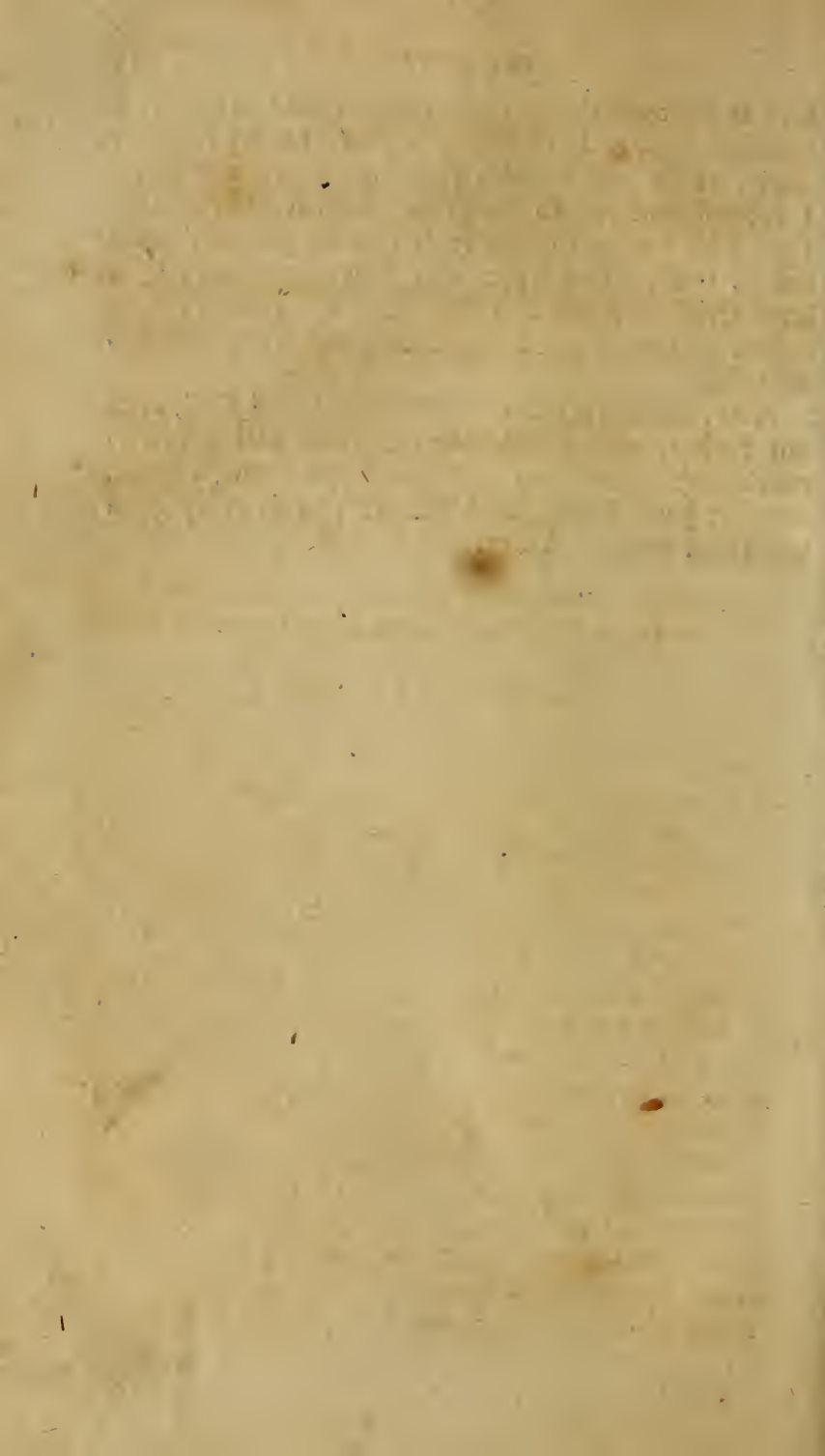
I have fpoken from principle, from abhorrence of rapacity, and from pity to the miferable. The fubject is uncommon. I know of none who preached in this ftain, except the patron and ornament of Ireland, whom I fhould not dare to name, becaufe I can never hope to imitate him, except in a tender concern for your wretched conditions. But though the fubject be new, it is copious; and I affure you, I know fome of my brethren who mourn over you in fecret, and who are able and ready to fet thofe points which I have firft publicly infifted on in a clear and ftriking light. Who can withhold himfelf from lamenting the impiety and afflicted ftate of his country? “In thee, O land, there is a fatal forgetfulnefs of God; in thee have they fet light by father and mother; in the midft of thee have they dealt by oppreffion; in thee have they vexed the fatherlefs and the widow. Thy princes in the midft of thee have hid their eyes from God’s Sabbath; they have taken

the treasure and the precious things, and have made many widows in the midst of thee; like wolves ravaging the prey, they have devoured souls. The people of the land have used oppression, they have exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and the needy." It is indeed very likely that some of you will blame me, because I have told you the truth. You will cry out, that I have departed from the usual track of sermons; that I should have preached on faith and repentance; that I have not a thorough understanding of my subject; that I meddle with things that are above me; and that I am not a friend to my country. And was I to publish this sermon, those who feel themselves pinched by its doctrine may hire some abject and prostitute scribbler to varnish over their oppression with specious colours; that it is to banish sloth and promote industry that they rack their rents; that there are yet many tenants in a thriving condition; that the distress complained of is but temporary, and will, in this trading country, soon work itself off; and that those who have left the country, or are intending to leave it, are the laziest, the most vicious and foolish of the people. I think every minister of Christ hath a right to preach against the sins of the poor and of the rich, "and to make his face strong against their faces, without being afraid or dismayed at their looks;" and that he only who conscientiously "warns the wicked," without fear of man's judgment, or seeking "to please men," discharges his duty. Sloth is certainly a bad thing; but oppression, instead of removing, tends directly to strengthen the disease. There is no appearance that the distress of farmers is coming to an end; and if it was, who is obliged to suffer it for an hour, when he can get away from it? I am glad that some tenants thrive; and it is well if those who talk about their thriving are not sorry that it is so well with them. He, I think, is a friend to his country who preaches

against those vices which tend directly to its ruin. I have not the least doubt, but that those oppressed farmers to whom God hath given wisdom and spirit to fly from oppression, will be christened with the vilest names which the malice and disappointed avarice of their cruel task-masters can invent. In a word, this sermon is actually on faith and repentance. I have, with all the earnestness I could, called upon the poor to be honest, and on oppressors to repent of their rapacity, and to make restitution to those whom they have ruined. Whatever opinion these last may form of me, I would do every thing in my power to reclaim them, even though I should give them some present pain. I wish some man of sense and candour would give us the particular history of a few of them, drawn up to the life, and without any exaggeration: The picture would have shades, but it might be useful. If such a glass were held up to them, it might have a better effect than many sermons, especially as (having turned their backs to the temple of God) few of them are at pains to hear sermons. If, in point of facts, I have committed any material mistakes, I shall be content to be set right. If I have used any expression that appears indecent, or too strong, I am not sensible of it: But I think it did not become me: I found it was impossible for me to speak about extortion, misery, nakedness, hunger, starving, and the desolation of my country, with that coolness which might become a speculative politician. Your good sense, and the diligence of my brethren, will, I hope, supersede the necessity of my preaching again wholly in this manner. I conclude, as usual, with leading back your thoughts to spiritual things and the eternal world. I beseech you to live by faith, and to work out your own salvation. Apply to God through Christ, and he will aid you with his grace. He is not, blessed be his glorious name, he is not like the task-masters of this world: He sends no man a war-

fare at his own charges ; he bids no man make brick without straw. If he requires duty, he, by his holy spirit, assists and enables men to perform the work. I recommend you to the grace and direction of that God who “ comes down to deliver his people ;” who brings “ the blind by a way they know not ; who leads them in paths that they have not known ; who makes darkness light before them, and crooked things straight.”

Now, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work. Amen.



PART II.

LETTERS, TRACTS, &c.

L E T T E R

From Pr-f-r ——— to H—— M——, Esq. Airshire,

EXPLAINING THE
M O T I V E S

*Which have determined the University of Glasgow to desert
the Blackfriar Church and betake themselves to a Chapel.*

WITH AN APPENDIX.

And now the Chapel's Silver Bell you hear,
That summons you to all the pride of prayer:
The pitch-pipe Music, broken and uneven,
Makes the soul dance upon a jig to Heaven.

POPE.

My Dear Sir,

SOME time ago, Mr. ———, who is a very diligent
lad, told me you were to write me; and last week
I was favoured with your much esteemed Letter,
wherein you earnestly desire me to inform you con-
cerning the motives which have determined us to
withdraw from the Blackfriar Church, and to erect a
Chapel for ourselves. You write in so very pressing
a manner, that, though I were averse to the thing, I
should not know how to give you a refusal. But in
truth I am exceeding glad that there is any thing
whereby I can oblige you; for, ever since you put

your son to both my classes, I have held you in great esteem; and I beg leave to tell you, that when I reached out my hand to you, I scarce expected so large a *honorarium* as you generously gave me. My heart warms whenever I think of you; and many times when we meet in faculty, we lament and regret deeply, that so few who send their children to our College have your liberal and gentlemanly turn of mind. You, Sir, know the value of ancient and solid literature, and have the heart to encourage those who instil it into the minds of our North-British youth.

Though I did not sit down to write this letter immediately after I had yours, yet I have been thinking every day upon the answer I was to give you; not that I intend to disguise or conceal from you any of our real motives, (for there is no need of that) but I deliberated a little in what language I should write to you; and have studied to write in such style and method as may best convey my meaning, and be most entertaining to you.

I will therefore endeavour to gratify your curiosity with respect to the real motives which influenced us to withdraw from the Blackfriar's, and betake ourselves to a chapel of our own. Every new thing, or departure from any old custom, is at first wondered at; and as our resolution, with respect to a chapel, is new, I find it occasions some speculation; for several others have been asking me our reasons for it, but I had not the same reason to oblige them as I have to oblige you.

I frankly acknowledge, that distance from the church, or want of room in it, the reasons commonly assigned for any new erection, do not take place here. Our college, you know, is just contiguous to the Blackfriar's; a fifth part of that church is our own property; and we have not, these sixty years, had as many scholars, in any one year, as occupied one-half of our room; so that we have been in use to set a

great many seats to the citizens, and have made a little money that way. And yet we have been determined to take this new step by reasons very cogent and substantial.

1. One reason of our being desirous to have a chapel, is, that we may thereby be rescued from that uneasiness, and even disgrace, under which we have hitherto laboured. To intermix with the mob in a church is disgracefully bringing ourselves to be, in some sort, on a level with them; it creates in people a belief that we need, and ought to be in earnest to receive the same instruction they are gaping for; a belief which, though we are at all proper pains to guard against, yet it still remains in some weak minds. And whether we strive to drive out that notional belief, by a smiling cheerfulness of behaviour during the service, or by sleeping, or by staying away from church, still we are sufferers; for either we go to church a-Sundays, or we stay at home; if we go, we either give attention, or we laugh, or we fall asleep: If we give, or seem to give attention, the people imagine we are as ignorant and superstitious as they are; and besides, we weary ourselves, and hurt our own temper: If we laugh, we offend the congregation; they call it a contemptuous laugh, a haughty disdain of the minister, and a manifest sneering at the orthodoxy of his doctrine: If we sleep, we offend them also, and besides give no marks of our superiority; for sleeping in church is a vulgar thing, practised by the very beggars and burn-bearers. Again, if we stay away from church, we must either ride in the fields, or walk in the college-garden, or stay in our rooms: If we ride abroad, the people who know and observe us imagine we are profane; if we walk in the college-garden, they make the same conclusion; if we stay in our rooms, we must either read plays or our own systems; if our servants catch us reading plays, they whisper to every body that we are graceless; if we read our

own systems, we very soon fall asleep upon them, and this prevents or mars our sleeping sound in the night-time. Therefore we judged it proper to deliver ourselves at once from all these hardships, by building ourselves a chapel. The superstitious part of the town will not know whether we attend it or not; and if some of us should happen to snore or sleep in the chapel, those who are present will have more sense than to blame us.

2. Another reason for this chapel is, that it will be a mark of our independency. It is not becoming our society, that we should have no place of worship but in one of the town-churches: This creates an imagination that we are inferior to and dependent on the city; and in this there is nothing of the *το Καλον* or the *το Πρεπον*. It is unsuitable to the dignity of philosophy, or its professors, to stoop, or seem to stoop, to burghesses or mercantile people; it is far more proper that they should be in appearance what they are in reality, quite above all other professions or ranks of men. Every one of us should aim, like Glaucus or Agamemnon in Homer,

Αἰν' ἀριστεύειν καὶ υπερχος εἰρμεῖναι ἄλλων :

or, as Pope translates it,

— to win renown,
To stand the first in honour and command.

Or, as Cicero hath it, “O vitæ philosophia dux, tu inventrix legum, tu magistra morum et disciplinæ fuisti;” for, as Seneca says, “Nunquam in tantum convalescet nequitia, nunquam sic contra virtutes conjurabitur, ut non philosophiæ nomen venerabile et sacrum maneat.” It is much more proper that some of the citizens of Glasgow should resort to a church of ours, than that we should meanly trudge to a church of theirs. The best of them may get solid instruction from us, and we can expect none from them.

3. The above reasons weighed much with us, as did that which I tell you next. We foresaw that a new beautiful chapel would add much to our dignity. Fifty years ago we were but in low estimation; there might be now and then a professor, who, upon account of merit and personal dignity, was confessedly above most clergymen; but in truth, Sir, we were generally looked upon as in a middle rank between parish ministers and country schoolmasters; and, at that time, no minister in town, and scarce one in the country, would have chosen to throw up his charge for the sake of one of our professorships. On the contrary, when any young man had taught a course in our college, he was, at his earnest desire, advanced to be minister of some country parish, if he seemed to deserve it. But luckily for us things are now altered. We have found means to increase our incomes in some proportion to the rising expence of living; and the clergy have not been able to find any means of increasing theirs. Sensible of this superiority, those of us who have been ministers choose not to preach in any parish-church, or pray in any private family, because that would derogate from our dignity; and though such made no figure, but were rather overlooked and despised while clergymen, because people could not see our concealed worth, nor discern our hidden learning, yet whenever we become professors, we are immediately more respectable, and are esteemed more learned than any clergyman whatsoever. This happens from the increase of our private incomes. But the college revenues being also great and well collected, our predecessors built themselves large and splendid houses, and ever afterwards we rose in rank and dignity. People see in what fine lodgings we dwell, and pay us respect in proportion. Now, we reckon that if our chapel were once built, it will add to our dignity, and that we shall become still more respectable. A philosopher, or learned man, is in-

deed complete in himself, in the conscious sense of his own merit: "Totus in seipso teres atque rotundus," as Horatius says: But yet in this age respect is also something; one likes to see himself taken notice of by those in upper life, and to be bowed to and admired by the vulgar; for "pulchrum est digito monstrari, et dicier hic est." But this empty respect is not the thing which we chiefly or solely aim at; along with that respect we want to have a little money, because, in our times, it is money chiefly which renders even philosophers respectable. We come up to the ancients in our teaching, and, like them, recommend poverty: "Honesta res est læta paupertas." We are forced, however, to depart a little from their temper, and to study by what lawful means we may get something into our possession; and luckily we have found that our houses have stood us in good stead; for when gentlemen come to enter their children to our college, they see in what splendour we live, and are ashamed to stint themselves to the usual pitiful *honorariums*: Some of them, at least, have sense to observe, that such lodgings and such furniture demand much higher pay than the small *minimum* which we exact. Besides, by the largeness of our houses, each of us is able to keep a great number of boarders, which we find to be a very profitable branch of business. We have raised the board-wages to a reasonable height; and, besides these wages, we expect, and gentlemen who have children with us are in use to send us very valuable compliments. Now, we expect that our chapel will procure us more respect, and great profit also, as I shall tell you more fully, when I shall have first acquainted you with some other reasons we had to be desirous of a separate chapel.

4. And I will not conceal from you, that the religion of Glasgow, and particularly that which is preached in the church where we attend, is not much to our taste. Charles II. used to say of presbytery in

general, that it was not a religion for gentlemen; and I may well aver, that presbytery, as we have it, is not a religion for either gentlemen or philosophers. All the masters, and the bulk of the students, for many years past, had become quite wearied and disgusted to hear in the church where we have our seats. The minister, though esteemed a man of learning, taste, and primitive simplicity, is often insisting upon the depravity of human nature, and the necessity of revelation. He seems to maintain, that philosophy is not sufficient to render men virtuous and happy: He says it is absolutely necessary to believe the gospel; and that without this all the systems and precepts of philosophy are feeble, and will in the issue prove ineffectual. He even describes, modestly indeed, but in a picturesque enough style, some practices, such as drunkenness, swearing, wenching, avarice, oppression, which he calls sinful, and inconsistent with having true religion: And while he is doing this, it often happens, that most of the students, and many of the congregation, gaze at us, as if we were the persons pointed out as guilty; and we are still more keenly gazed at when he describes the duties of Christians, Sabbath-keeping, family-worship, justice, veracity, temperance, chastity, and what should be the conversation of those who are entrusted with the education of youth. All this, you will agree with me, is vexatious, and even unendurable. We have, whatever may be said of us, a real, though a general, and philosophical religion; and had we a chapel, where such of us as have been clergymen are to preach by turns, we will have discourses upon the dignity of human nature, upon disinterested benevolence, upon sympathy and propriety, upon living according to nature, and upon virtue's being a sufficient reward to itself. When any of ourselves takes the pulpit, he will have more sense and delicacy than to deliver any offensive descriptions; and when any young man preaches, he

will be cautious, and scarce venture on any thing that is like to disoblige any of us. I like beautiful and oratorical discourses upon general topics; I hate such as minutely descend to particulars; there is a tiresome and disgusting littleness in them. And what signifies it to irritate a learned man for any freedoms he is supposed to have taken? I never knew that such discourses produced any other effect, but the contrary to that which the preacher intended.

It is a fixed maxim among us, that "That is always the best religion which takes the slightest hold of the heart, and the slightest the better." And though, with respect to the intention of the speaker, it is a very different religion which we have been hearing, we have, however, had the firmness to remain hitherto untouched and uncorrupted by it; and, though I say it, it is a great truth, and no vain boast, that it will be difficult to find as many wise and good men, in so narrow a place, upon whom the vulgar and superstitious religion of the country hath taken so little hold. We owe this firm and fearless temper to philosophy, and the knowledge we have of the causes of things; for,

*Fœlix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes et insuperabile fatum,
Subjecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari.*

Or, in Cicero's words, "O philosophia, ad te confugimus, tu vitæ tranquillitatem nobis es largita, et terrorem mortis sustulisti."

5. But what farther increases our fondness to have a chapel for ourselves is a very idle and senseless opinion that almost universally prevails at Glasgow. They imagine that we are to be as strict in our life and conversation as ordinary people, and that if we take a little liberty like gentlemen, we are to be called to an account for it like weavers. This you will think very strange, or quite incredible; and yet the silly people are all in these sentiments, and even keen

in them. If one of us hath been cheerful over night, at a bottle with a few gentlemen, or officers of the army; or if he hath forgot his philosophy for a moment, and indulged himself a little in the way of natural pleasure, there is first a whisper, then a loud cry is raised against him; he is pointed at on the streets, the house he was cheerful in is examined, the girl he conversed with is sought for to accuse him, kirk-officers are hounded out upon him, some minister or elder *travels* with him to bring him to a confession, he is called to compear before some of their kirk-sessions; and it is believed his sin or scandal, as they call it, cannot be taken away till he shall have done penance in some of their churches: And I do assure you, that not long ago some amongst us escaped very narrowly. Now, Sir, consider what a hardship it is on a learned man to compear in a pitiful session, and confess that to be a sin which he knows to be no sin; or to compear publicly in a church, and give signs of repentance for what he firmly believes need not be repented of, and what he is resolved to repeat whenever he finds himself urged by the calls of nature: What an impropriety, nay, what an indignity is it, that a philosopher should stand, as a delinquent, before a congregation of taylors, shoe-makers, barbers, and shop-keepers, and appear to be just as much a natural man, to have just the same passions, and just as little philosophy to guide him, as any of them, or any porter or scavenger who happens to be present. Consider farther, how grievous it is that he should be standing in a low and disgraceful place, or on the stool itself, and nothing but a common minister reviling him from above, instructing him about the *το ηγεμονικον*, the command of passion which he hath often talked about, admonishing him to believe what he has always rejected, and rebuking him for the foulness of the supposed crime which he is supposed to have gracelessly committed. If you consider how grievous

all this must be to a great mind, how vexatious to be thus affrighted, and to be in perpetual fright; how unsufferable to be abused by a low person, before an assembly of low and contemptible people; you certainly must see the wisdom of withdrawing, and securing ourselves from such insolent and ignoble usage. We conduct ourselves like philosophers, and are determined to follow nature, *vivere secundam naturam*. We are men of genius; the king has singled us out from among all the learned men in Scotland, to be regents and professors; and from the eminence on which we stand, we perfectly discern the littleness and folly of the vulgar.

Spiritum Graiæ tenuem Camœnæ,
Parca non mendæ dedit, et malignum
Spernere vulgus.

As we move in the regions of philosophy, we want to have elbow-room: We gain our money as we can, and choose to spend it as we please; we choose to enjoy that freedom, and partake of those pleasures which nature offers, and philosophy allows. In this philosophic temper we mean no harm, but good to every man; no hurt, but pleasure to any woman. If philosophy hath not yet made us quite perfect, we have however but few and very slender faults; *medicribus et queis ignoscas vitiis*: And if we now and then make some slight deviations from the dull routine of life, must we be judged, be disciplined, be penanced as the vilest of the people are? This is a treatment not to be borne, not to be submitted to by free minds. No nobleman, no gentleman of rank or fortune in the country, no wealthy merchant in the city, who happens to be a delinquent, though he should be in fifty relapses, is ever called to any account, even in parishes where the ministers are the strictest and most zealous in Scotland. And must we be hunted down for one or two slight offences, while others are freely permitted to range about at large? If our clergy had

civility, they would not trouble us; but since they have such delight in that kind of work, they ought, (which I must confess they commonly do) they ought to satisfy themselves with molesting the poorer sort of tradesmen and country people who are sooner frightened, and more tame under the lash of their discipline than we choose to be.

Though I may seem keen against kirk-prosecutions, I assure you that the greatest part of us are sober, cool, and mortified persons, in no danger of spending our money at a tavern, or being any ways misled by that other passion which subjects to scandal. In this respect we are perfectly and constitutionally chaste; We are really as innocent and harmless as any in the world; and of this our wives can give ample testimony. But if there be two or three of a more brisk and lively turn, it is our business to protect them, and not suffer ourselves to be maltreated by kirk-sessions or ministers, who are so low persons in comparison of us. And if once we had a separate chapel, it will be natural for us, upon any aberration, (for *Diaboli virtus est in lumbis*) to do public penance there, if that is judged necessary to sopite the cry that may have been raised in town. This indeed will still be a hardship; but it will be milder than otherwise; it will be making compearance in a house of our own, and where ourselves are the principal persons. The offender, who has unfortunately been detected, will be admonished by one of ourselves, by one of his brethren philosophers, who will be very gentle to him, both from a philosophical persuasion that the thing he stands for is no crime, and probably also from a remembrance that he himself hath often fallen into the like slips, and foreseeing that he may soon, if detected, have occasion to compear in the same place, and be rebuked by the same gentleman he is now rebuking. Besides, he will be rebuked before a number of frank, blithe, and polite people, who have many

of them made such harmless slides, and can make candid allowances for them in others. The gentleness shown to delinquents in our chapel will appear amiable; other ministers and congregations will follow our example; and a great alteration in opinion about scandalous matters will, as we hope, be insensibly brought about.

6. For we have a most extensive and generous aim to be effectuated by means of our chapel: We want by degrees to controul the public opinion with respect to scandal; we want to divert the resentment which men have against the matters for which penance is now done, and to turn it against those things which really deserve censure. What is it for which men ought to be rebuked? It is ignorance and contempt of philosophy, depreciating logic, metaphysics, and moral theories, slighting of learned men, putting them off with niggardly payments, seeking money from them, complaining of their rigour in exacting their teinds, or laying them under abominable restraints. The faults for which men appear before a congregation are really no faults at all; instead of being rebuked they should be commended for them. * When a man is at a bottle over night, and happens to be overtaken a little, and is put in good humour, he is but acting the social part; he obeys the dictates of philosophy: If he should reel and stumble on the street, he can rise again; if in a cheerful mood he breaks a few windows, he can pay the damage. Why need he be rebuked? Marriage is expensive, and not always convenient: A philosopher who casts his eyes on a personable girl, and takes her aside, does her a kind thing, and raises up a child who may be useful to the public. These are all or most of the things that are commonly censured. A philosopher discerns, with one glance of his eye, that none of them merits censure, nor ought to be censured. It is the business of philosophers, and it is left to them to

set the opinions of men to rights. We intend to dispel the mist of ignorance from the minds of our countrymen, to break the shackles of prejudice, and open to them a broad and spacious way wherein they may walk with ease and freedom. This I am sure you will admit is a glorious attempt; and in pursuit of it we expect to render ourselves as illustrious as the immortal Grecian philosopher.

Primum Graius homo, mortales tendere contra

Est oculos ausus, primusque obistere contra.

—Deus ille fuit, Deus, inclyte Menimi.

If we can bring about so desirable a revolution of opinions and sentiments, we will do the public an important service, a service which it is worth while to contend for; and though we had no other advantage in view, it would be noble, and like the ancients, to be at the expence of a chapel to gain so good an end.

7. But I have left our strongest reason for a chapel to be mentioned last; and in plain English it is this, we expect to make a great deal of profit by it. We might be content to be without respect, and to be even more vile than we are at present; we might suffer public penance, and to be instructed and admonished by one who is poorer and much more ignorant than we are, if any of these were sure means to be enriched. To be little thought of is indeed ill enough, but it takes nothing out of one's pocket; and words, though severe and reproachful, are still but words, and will not break one's head, nor empty his coffers; but to be poor is a real and great evil indeed. *Paupertas mihi onus visum est, et miserum, et grave*, as Terentius has it. Poverty may sit pretty easy upon some sorts of people, but on modern philosophers it is pungent and insupportable. Poverty all men choose to escape, and the greatest part feel the utmost horror at it. Philosophers may in other respects have a fixed antipathy to the opinions of the people, but in

this respect they see great cause to beat time and go along with them. Here we have made a small deviation from the ancients, necessitated to do so by that change in manners and opinions which hath been produced in a course of ages, always advancing to further improvement. The desire of making a little money is now a part of solid wisdom; *Qui sapit, sibi sapit.*

Μισῶ σοφιστὸν ὅστις οὐκ αὐτῷ σοφός.

It is, if I may so say, embodied with, or hath become the very soul and quintessence of modern philosophy. But it is nothing to have the desire of money, without the skill of gratifying that desire; and in this skill the world will do us the justice to acknowledge, that we have already made some very considerable improvement. Let others examine the figure of the earth, its distance from the sun, the variation of the needle, or causes of the tides; this is our favourite branch of philosophy,

Orabunt caussas melius, cœlique meatus
Describent, radio et surgentia sidera dicent.
Hæ tibi erunt artes.

This we study, in this we exercise ourselves by night and by day, in our houses, our classes, our public and private walks; ever striving to find out some new commendable method of increasing our revenues, and making the most of our small affairs. When we are seen walking on the street, some of us with lank, meagre, hollow cheek, a demure countenance, and serious air, the people believe that we are always in the exercise of devotion; but they are sometimes mistaken. *Interdum vulgus rectum videt est ubi peccat.* It is true, we are serious, and there is great propriety in our putting on that appearance; for, *in sacris simulata pro veris accipiuntur*, as Servius hath judiciously remarked. But we are serious in cultivating that branch of true philosophy which is our province. And first

and last, as I have said, we have not been altogether unsuccessful, nor rested in bare speculation. Our predecessors, in times of persecution, by giving proper information against the puritanical party, merited large donations of teinds and feus, which, though suspected for many years to be invalid, are now confirmed by long prescription. We, for our part, have raised the minimum of our *honorariums*. We have most of us two classes, a public and a private; and thus, by artfully extending our usefulness, (for great is the utility of private classes) we obtain yearly two *honorariums* from each student. By our large houses, as above, we have convenience to board the rich lads, and by wisely propagating a belief that we instruct them in private, and take care of their morals, we have wormed the citizens out of that lucrative trade of boarding, and have engrossed it to ourselves. In some parishes, where we have right to the teinds, we triple the grassums, and continue, or double the yearly payment at the end of every nineteen years. In other parishes we value the teinds, and raise very considerable, but still very reasonable sums. When simple people pay us teinds, and have no tack from us, we add every year a little to the sum payable, till we have raised it a third or a fourth more than was payable by the ancient roll; but this we do chiefly when the lands are improved, and can well bear it. Such ministers as we are forced to pay, we, for their and our own good, detain their stipends a year, or even two full years, and having got interest upon it from the bank, we divide the profits. Other ministers we pay at 100 l. Scots per chaldler, instead of the *fiar* which we exact, and make by that means great profit every year, sometimes near half the value of their stipends. After a stipend hath been more than a full year due, if we pay more than 4 l. or 5 l. at a time, we exact a little by way of discount; and though we have done so for many years, we were never publicly

detected, except in one instance, when indeed one of us, as you would hear, was so hard put to it, that he was forced to acknowledge part of the truth, upon oath, in a civil court. We have lately procured an act of parliament, with respect to some of our burfaries, by which it is made lawful for us to touch the money ourselves. When young men, who we fufpect would not pay us, apply for burfaries, we upon examination find them ignorant, and take care that thofe be preferred who we forefee will expend the value of their feveral burfaries in payments for our private claffes. When, by old deeds of mortification, we feem obliged to bear the third part expence of repairing or building a parifh church, we fet our feet a-fpar, and aver folemnly that we are not obliged to be at any expence at all; but if people be clamorous, we fling them a few guineas, which we tell them is a prefent to them. Demands of that kind are now pretty rarely made; becaufe, having all the original papers and extracts of them in our cuftody, the people know not whether they have a title to demand any thing or not; though in a late instance, after a ftout and fuccefsful battle to fave our money, we were in fome danger; for, by an act of faculty, we had met with fix gentlemen, and bargained to give towards building their church a very confiderable fum, which, by another final act of faculty, we decreed to keep to ourfelves; and fhortly afterwards they were very near fingering papers which would have taught them more than we intend they fhould ever learn; but by an extraordinary and well-timed diligence that danger was happily warded off. Thefe are a few instances of our improvement in practical philosophy. *Nec fumus attentiores ad rem quam fat eft.* We need all that we can get hold of; and all that we do, or have done, is fair and perfectly juft. In fact, we find that we have ftill by far too little, which puts us upon inventing means of getting fomewhat more. *Quis*

est pauper? qui sibi videtur pauper; as Seneca hath taught us. Learned men, in this age, must make the best shift they can; they best deserve, and best know the use of riches.

It was principally with this same view of profit that we first thought of a chapel, and are now resolved to build one. Some people imagined at first, that we were going to squander away money, purely for the sake of religion, and that we might accommodate the citizens at an easy rate, of whom it is said there are fourteen or sixteen hundred families who cannot get seats in any of the town churches; but upon second thoughts these people soon discovered their own foolish mistake. If we build a chapel, it must yield us profit. Once we designed to have a church upon the establishment; but after mature reflection, we are convinced it will be much more profitable to have only a chapel, provided it be large enough: A fifteenth part of it will accommodate us and our students; the rest of it we will let to the citizens, and expect 200 l. a-year for the seats; for the richer and politer sort will resort to it. We will raise yearly 150 l. collection, which we well know how to dispose of. We will by way of auction set the seats which are our property in the Blackfriar church at 100 l. yearly; 200 l. and 150 l. is 350 l. and 100 l. more is 450 l. We will raise a capacious and handsome enough chapel for about 1000 l. which, as our security is good, we can borrow at four per cent. By the bye we get five per cent. for our own money. This brings down the yearly profit to 410 l. We will give a young lad 30 s. *per diem dominicum*, for preaching a few Sundays, suppose twenty, which will take away other 30 l. This will leave the neat yearly profit at 380 l.; and this we will divide amongst ourselves. There are six fellows of the university who are to preach by turns, and they will no doubt expect to be very well paid; but the rest also must have a

reasonable proportion. Now, if we should make it a church upon the establishment, the minister would run away with 130 l. from us, which would in some sort defeat our end, and render our particular quotas more scrimp and pitiful. In that case, we would have only 250 l. to divide amongst ourselves.

8. Nor are we just so totally intent upon profit, and on Christian liberty, as not to aim also at a reform in the matter and method of preaching; another reason for the chapel which I had almost forgotten. I must confess, that our lectures on composition have not produced all the effect that was expected from them: Many who have been taught by us are in truth, Sir, very lifeless, clumsy, and heavy-headed preachers. I lately heard one of them in a certain church, who, if he could not be said to be the inventor of sleep, was at least a powerful promoter of it. He gave copious and successful doses of the true soporific. I soon found myself becoming drowsy; I kept mine eyes open as long as I could; I supported my head on my palm, with my elbow on the desk before me: Sleep however overpowered me; but I was soon set awake by a painful stroke which my chin received in falling, by the law of gravitation, on the front of the gallery: With difficulty I caught hold of my wig, which had half fallen down from my head. I was for some time in confusion, rubbing my eyes, and knew not where I was: As soon as I recovered my senses, I heard all the masters on my right and left hand snoring loud, and saw most of our students, and many of the congregation, fast asleep; and was forriest of all to see our own *Alumnus* nodding in the pulpit, his eyes half-shut, and broken sentences and half words coming slowly from his mouth. When I became more awake, and had crawled home, "Well and good, said I to myself, truth is best hit upon by chance; this hath been an instructive sleep to me; I have learned more by it than ever I did by any

grammatical or philosophical investigation." I reasoned upon the matter, and was convinced, that lectures on composition, without models both of composition and delivery, would not be effectful. But when in our chapel example is superadded to precept; when discourses are accurately composed, according to the Aristotelian, the Ciceronian, and Quintilianian rules, and especially by the energy of our own rhetorical systems, delivered with a philosophical solemnity, with spirit and vivacity, and all the graces of elocution; when, preaching by turns, every one of us is seen to exult in his own peculiar excellence, and all of us soar, like Elijah, high above the heads of all ordinary public speakers, instruction, like a cloak, will drop down from us; our young Elishas will receive a double portion of our spirit, and pray and preach accordingly. Then a wonderful and much-needed improvement in the art of preaching will quickly take place; the spirit of eloquence, like *assa fœtida*, or any strongly odoriferous body, will diffuse itself on all sides from our chapel. First it will seize on the ministers of the town, then on these in the neighbourhood, and then gradually extend its influence to the most remote parts; by which operation, our chapel will have the singular glory of improving the whole kingdom.

And while we are reforming the art of preaching, we will at the same time do our utmost to improve our church music, which hitherto consists of little else but jarring and discordant sounds. It is pity we are not able to restore the music of the ancients, which produced so astonishing effects. To supply that want, one of our number is, in the ensuing vacation, to visit the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland; the seats of our ancient heroes, our Connals, our Starnos, and our Fingals, celebrated in the songs of our Ossians, our Crunniochs, and our Pibrochs. This is a tour unknown to the ancients, and happily reserved

to brighten the souls of philosophers in this cultivated age. In these noble islands, one must be entertained with many odd curiosities, and see and hear many things that must elevate his genius and refine his taste. Mull, Egg, Barra, Tyrteuskin, Phlangmuggafes, Chuphichico, Challenga, Buttendwi, Phartattum, Gronckfort, Gripgoldom, Jura, Yehetna, Ronagat, Duntlum, Skie, Lewes, and many others. We are yet but learning their names; but hereafter they will be well known, and greatly resorted to by men of learning and taste. To visit them in order will be the grand polite tour of modern times. Great alterations happen in the world: *Quid tibi visa Chios, Bullati notaque Lesbos; Quid concinna Samos, quid Cræsi regia Sardis?* was of old the question put to a Roman gentleman returned from his travels. Now, a learned man hath composed a poem, consisting of fifty-seven verses, to be addressed to our colleague at his return.

Quid tibi visa Lew'si, Bulhede, sanctaque Kilda;

Quid concinna Southuist, quid Fingalis Regia Morven, &c.

I will not insert the poem, nor say any more at present about the delight and advantage which will be derived from visiting the Western Isles. Our colleague's principal aim in this voyage is to enrich our sacred poesy, and improve our church music; and we have ground to hope he will succeed. We smelled out something from the heiress of Muck, who was in this city some weeks ago. The scent was too strong and savoury not to be pursued. Being set upon a proper track, the intelligence we had got was confirmed by the schoolmaster of Phlogbirch, and still further by a devout and learned Highland divine, Mr. Macfribble, who is minister of Dronioch. With the two last we keep up a constant correspondence. All the three agree, that in the island of Pleycip, Macsqueel, Clocfooti, Drumgrunt, or Crumyaau, may be found some hymns and oratorios, part of which ought to have been inserted in the printed copy of the he-

roic poem of Fingal, and the rest in that of Temora : They even give us some cause to expect, that in one of these isles a bard may be found who is skilled in the songs, and can perform the music of other times. These hymns, if recovered, will be a rich acquisition ; and if such a bard is brought to this place, he will strike up his melodious Gaelic tunes, reform and alter our music, and be a great ornament to our chapel ; and we will make him professor of Gaelic.

However, though our friend should not be altogether successful in his first tour, we will take care to serve the cause of music. An organ is what we would intend ; but in truth we are a good deal startled at the expence ; and we choose not to do this without a little preparation, lest the captious people hereabout should be too much disgusted. In the mean time, therefore, to save money, we will begin with a pitch-pipe. Cheap music is good music. A pitch-pipe will strike the just tone : Music in the four parts will be sung in our chapel with admirable harmony, to the great delight and devotion of the worshippers, and the great wonder and entertainment of the whole city. Great and delightful will be the effect of the pitch-pipe : The pitch-pipe may be hissed at and condemned at first ; but from its surprising agreeableness, it is almost certain, that there will very soon be at least one pitch-pipe and one pitch-piper in every church in city and country. And it may further be expected, from that respect which is paid to our example, that in a little time there will be a pitch-pipe and a pitch-piper in every rich and numerous family.

And that complete decency in every part of the service may be observed, we will all attend the chapel ; and especially we will take care that our *Oeconomus* be as often present as possible : He is a member of faculty, and must be seated on some eminent place where every one within the walls may have a full view of him, as he will be of great use to dispose the

Students to gravity; for if it be the characteristic of the sublime, that it always occasions some emotion of terror, his face is certainly a very sublime object: Should any of our students be in a lightsome mood, his craving and tremendous visage will no sooner be beheld, but it will instantly create terror in their souls, and gravity in their countenances. If he shall now and then mount the pulpit (which he is well qualified to do, for he is a deep scholar in Hebrew without the points; he is an able and extraordinary critic in all sermons; he is full sounder than any of us; and if he knew of any thing more difficult and incredible than what he believes already, he would immediately show that he has strength to surmount it, or capacity to swallow it down), every one who sees him will be frightened, and overawed into a shivering silence and decent composure. He is an useful and well-chosen member indeed: He is accurate in collecting money, and buying up provisions for us on week-days; and by his grim severity of countenance and terrifying looks, he is able to throw an instantaneous and abiding damp upon gay and youthful minds, and absolutely secure the solemnity of our religious meetings on Sundays.

These are the reasons we had for a separate chapel; and I am persuaded they will appear to you very strong and cogent. This chapel delivers us from many painful inconveniencies; it will be a public monument of our independency; it adds to our dignity; it shelters us from kirk-prosecutions and pitiful penances, or at least renders them less intolerable; it will set right the notions of the world with respect to those things which deserve public censure; it delivers us from a religion that is not to our liking, and affords us an opportunity of hearing philosophical and oratorical sermons; it puts it in our power to display our talents, to be patterns of true eloquence, and to improve the most distant parts of the country in the art

of speaking in public; it will, by the use of the pitch-pipe, greatly alter and improve our church music; and it is a wise and laudable mean of gaining something considerable to ourselves. I have written this from the very sentiments of my heart; and have honestly, and without reservation, laid open to you the views we have had; and I hope we shall have your approbation. Had we erected a church, and made up a legal session from among ourselves, our students, and our servants (alas! we have just now lost a wise and valuable servant, whose counsel and assistance was of great use to us), we would have been still better secured, at least in one respect; but then we would have made much less profit; besides, a fixed stipend, over and above the loss of so much money, would render the minister independent on us, and he might, in a little time, give the same grievous descriptions, and use the same freedom of speech by which we have already suffered so much; and in this respect we would be just as we were before. Young lads whom we can turn off at pleasure, will of course preach politely, and make it their principal study to keep off any fault which any of us hath been so much as suspected of. Their own interest will teach them to be modest and discreet. Such discretion and politeness will raise our esteem of them, and it may also recommend them to the good liking of several congregations in town and country. And further, as we design only a chapel, there is no necessity of giving the communion in it, which will save us the price of the elements. On these occasions, we will just step into some of the town churches, and take as much as we please, where the magistrates are to defray the expence.

But I fear it will be a year, or even more, before we can get a spacious chapel erected. However, when October comes, we will meet for worship in our own large hall, where we will have room enough

for ourselves and our students, and may also set a good many seats by way of auction; or we may sell 200 tickets at a crown a-piece, which will be above three guineas to each of us, which is still something. It puts us into a little perplexity, that, by the statutes of the college, women are not to be admitted within our gates: On the one hand, it is feared, that if we rigidly observe that statute, several of our students may choose to go to some church in the city which is frequented by the ladies; on the other hand, it is foreseen, that if young ladies are allowed to come to the hall, the students will entice them to their chambers to drink tea after the service; that a freer and opener intercourse between females and the college gentlemen than hath hitherto subsisted may take place, and that there may be a violent suspicion of disorderly familiarities, which will bring scandal upon the college, and upon the ladies who resort to it. On each hand there is certainly some danger; but it will, we judge, be rather wiser to admit the ladies, which will prevent our meeting from being thin, and our orator from being no more but *vox clamantis in deserto*. We will take all the care we can that there be no outward indecency. Old statutes, when found to be inconvenient, deserve to be exploded. At the worst, this inconveniency will only be suffered while we use the hall as a chapel; it will be totally removed whenever the new chapel is erected. And, to balance that inconveniency, whilst we meet in the hall, we will not need to preach, nor hire any lad to preach in vacation time. It is true, that when we have roused our seats in the Blackfriar's we will have no room for ourselves in any church: But when any of us happens to go to a church in summer, the town's people will not grudge to give us a seat for once, in a month or so. We will not choose to give them too much trouble.

And now, Sir, I shall leave you to judge, from the

length and nature of this letter, how real and how great an esteem I have for you. I once designed to have written the letter wholly in Latin, in imitation of the ancients, and believing that you who are so liberal to learned men must have a great deal of learning yourself; but, in compliance with custom, I have written it as I could in the vulgar English. I have, however, interspersed a Latin sentence here and there.

I presume I have now satisfied your curiosity, and have nothing more to add, but that I hope your two younger sons will be ready for our college against October. It is pity that many rich people hurry their sons to business without making them acquainted with the ancient languages, or giving them a course of solid philosophy. I know well that you have too much esteem of learning to be of that number. With great duty and respect,

I am, &c.

Glasgow College, }
May, 1764. }

APPENDIX.

BOOKSELLERS have often sent abroad unfinished and mutilated productions of great authors, surreptitiously obtained, and have pestered the world with many pieces of Grub-street stuff, recommended by the names of learned men, who could never have any hand in such poor and wretched trash, equally destitute of sense and taste. The publisher disdains such practices, and solemnly declares that there is no imposition in the present case. The Letter he now delivers to the public is the real and genuine work of Pr—f—r ———, correctly written in his own hand. He came very honestly by the manuscript: And as among all those to whom he showed it there was but

one (who is indeed an honest and grave enough sort of man) who did not discern and esteem the spirit of it, he was soon determined to put it to the press. He discerned in it a manly freedom of thought, and a noble sincerity, which is only to be found among the learned, among persons of good breeding, or those of an uncommonly elevated turn of mind; a sincerity, which, though it may be nibbled at by small wits and persons of rigid principles who love to walk in trammels, is, however, the characteristic of great and generous minds. In his judgment, a worse man would have writ with that stingy caution and reserve, which is so generally the symptom of a duplicity of soul. But this author, from a guileless heart, unveils the truth, and expresses his sentiments without mincing or disguise. To communicate truth is his sincere aim; and he appears to have laid it down as a maxim, that from truth he will never swerve for any consideration whatsoever; so that, though it were possible to take advantage of any particular unguarded expression, (if he hath fallen into such) it would be the utmost baseness to attempt it: But if any such baseness should be found in any person, the author will be sufficiently able to defend himself, and will have all the men of wit and taste in the three kingdoms on his side. A man of merit should be supported, if he is like to be maliciously borne down. We are highly obliged to philosophers, and ought to applaud them, when they attend accurately to their own genuine feelings, and delineate them with a strict regard to truth and nature; for thereby we are led to a true knowledge of the human heart, and discover those latent springs which set the world in motion.

The publisher is sensible that every writer hath a style and method peculiar in some sort to himself, and that when he takes pen in hand, such words and phrases as he hath been most accustomed to do naturally occur to him; he is therefore no ways startled

at the words Horatius, Terentius, &c. though not very commonly used. He is far from criticising the composition of any sensible and spirited author; for he neither envies nor undervalues talents which he is sure he can never reach: Far less will he take upon him to criticise the above letter; for, whatever its author's faults may be, they are amply compensated by that candid uprightness, that unreserved and intrepid freedom with which he writes: And, which redounds still more to his praise, and must endear him to every honest man, it hath been sufficiently vouched that he generously consented that his letter should be published, foreseeing, that as it contains a faithful and undisguised account of the matter in question, it will appear to be a complete vindication of himself and the society of which he has the honour to be a member; and perhaps he judged such a vindication or apology to be very necessary.

The publisher indeed wishes that the learned professor had seen fit to write his Letter wholly in what he is pleased to call the *vulgar English*, without interspersing any of his Greek or Latin sentences, because these have occasioned him some perplexity and trouble. He was afraid it might be suspected that under these phrases was couched something mysterious, or disloyal, or even dangerous and heretical. Moreover, it was suggested to him by some gentlemen of discernment, that the shreds of Greek and Latin might, in some places, unless they were translated, mar the sense and meaning of the piece: He judged it his duty to save the author, as far as possible, from being so much as suspected of any wrong or unsound opinions; and he was also desirous to make every word intelligible to ordinary readers. He therefore had recourse to a certain university scholar who resorts to his shop, and prevailed upon him to turn the Greek and Latin into English: He hath not skill to judge whether these translations be elegant;

he even suspects them to be somewhat clumsy; but believes, that though delicacy may be a-wanting, the author will, from his innate candour, be ready to acknowledge that the sense is pretty exactly hit upon. He was advised by a very grave citizen to leave out the Greek and Latin entirely, and to insert the translations in the respective places; but he durst not venture on so bold a step, which might justly have provoked the learned professor. He hath with the nicest care kept the text pure, entire, and genuine, as it came from the author's pen; and, to preserve the full appearance of its genuineness, he did not even choose to put the translations at the foot of the page, by way of notes or commentary. Some of the translations are said to be taken from standard books, and the rest of them are, he verily believes, the best his friend could make out: As they are he presents them to the English reader, with references to the particular places where they occur in the body of the work; and for the full and complete understanding of the book, the diligent reader may, if he please, write the translations, or most of them, upon the margin.

He hath only five things to add:

1. That if, through inadvertency or haste, the learned professor hath misquoted any passage, the translator is not answerable for any such mistake.

2. He begs the learned reader to forgive his swelling the volume by this Appendix, which is purely designed for the benefit of those who either were never taught, or who have forgotten the learned languages; of both which sorts there are many sensible people in the country, and several also in the city. Among the last, the publisher, though unworthy, professeth himself to be one.

3. He positively assures the public, that the book is not to remain with having only its Greek and Latin sentences translated. The whole of it will, within the space of a few months, be translated into all the

European languages, except the Russ and the Portuguese. For his own part, as the piece is quite different from the insipid productions of hireling, prostitute, and illiterate scribblers, and is indeed possessed of a very uncommon merit, he hath already determined, in imitation of his Neapolitan majesty, to compliment every British and every foreign university with a copy of it.

4. He acknowledges he hath heard it whispered, that the candid author's colleagues are displeased at his having writ with so much openness, and that they even begin to talk big about their criminal jurisdiction, or power of beheading and hanging, which, it seems, they have anciently or recently obtained; a dangerous power, most certainly, if lodged in some hands. He thinks it somewhat improbable, that they will make the first essay and exertion of that power upon one of themselves; for, if they once begin, they may see cause to proceed very far, and may even be at a loss where to stop; though, on the other hand, unless they begin with one of themselves, their privilege may lie for ever dormant, because it is unlikely that any citizen or countryman will offer himself, or venture to be tried at their tribunal. If it be true, that they are really displeased, he thinks they will rather silt him before some other tribunal than their own. Extrusion may be tried; or a swinging fine, with a pithy admonition and rebuke from the faculty, as in other cases, may satisfy them; or perhaps some of them may write against their own colleague, and strive to give a different account of the matter; though it will be difficult to fly in the face of truth; for the particulars mentioned by the professor, at which his colleagues are said to be most displeased, are, it seems, true beyond all possibility of being denied. A considerable merchant in this city is pretty singular in his opinion: He offers to lay a great wager, that from a mistaken regard to their colleague, they will audaci-

ously refuse that ever he writ the piece, and endeavour to father it upon some unknown or ignorant person. This opinion gains no credit. The publisher firmly believes the motives mentioned in the Letter to be the real and genuine ones, and hopes, that if there shall unluckily be a controversy on this point, the learned gentlemen will manage it with decency, and with the temper of philosophers. When great scholars have different views of a fact or speculative point, they treat one another politely, and keep ever in mind, that to discover or convey truth is the great end of all the controversies of the learned.

5. And lastly, He begs the other learned gentlemen, instead of vain altercations with their brother, to publish, as fast as ever they can, those valuable manuscripts which they have finished, whether composed by one or by the joint efforts of five or six; because to print them is the most effectual method to preserve them from being lost. And he humbly calls upon them to take warning from that woeful and unfortunate accident which so lately happened to one of themselves; whose whole manuscripts, the labour of many painful days and nights, was shipwrecked, and cast away upon the coast of Norway; a misfortune the more grievous, as it is so observable, and never like to be repaired; for, ever since, from all that unfortunate gentleman's lectures and discourses, the fatal loss of his papers hath been too manifest; and hath been painfully felt and heavily bemoaned by every person who went and stayed to hear him.

TRANSLATION

OF THE

GREEK AND LATIN.

Page. Line.

234. 15. The beautiful, *ib.* Decorum, decency, or propriety.
 ibid. 27. O philosophy! thou hast been the guide of mankind,
 thou hast invented laws, thou hast taught us mora-
 lity and science.
 ibid. 29. Never will wickedness prevail so far, never will such a
 conspiracy be formed against the virtues, but that the
 name of philosophy must still remain venerable and
 sacred.
 236. 6. It is a fine thing for one to be wondered at, and to
 have it said of him, "This is the man."
 ibid. 13. Joyful poverty is an honourable thing.
 238. 24. Happy the man, who, studying nature's laws,
 Through known effects can trace the secret cause;
 His mind possessing, in a quiet state,
 Fearless of fortune, and resign'd to fate. DRYDEN.
 ibid. 27. O philosophy! to thee we betake ourselves; thou hast
 given us tranquillity of life, and taken away the fear
 of death.
 239. 33. The guiding, directing, or conducting faculty.
 240. 8. To live according to nature.
 ibid. 14. ————— by fate
 Gently inspir'd with the poetic strain,
 We trample on the vulgar with disdain.
 ibid. 25. Vices, but moderate ones, we have,
 Which one may easily forgive.
 241. 21. The power and mettle of the devil is in the loins.
 243. 9. Long time men lay oppress'd with slavish fear,
 Religion's tyranny did domineer,
 Which being plac'd in heaven, look'd proudly down,
 And frighted abject spirits with her frown;
 At length a mighty one * of Greece began
 To assert the nat'ral liberty of man;
 By senseless terrors and vain fancies led
 To slav'ry: Straight the conquer'd phantoms fled.
 What verse can soar on so sublime a wing
 As reaches his deserts? What muse can sing
 As he requires? What poet now can raise
 A stately monument of endless praise,
 Great as his vast deserts, who first did show
 Those useful truths? —————

* *Epicurus.*

Page. Line.

For if we view the mighty things he show'd,
 His useful truths proclaim, *He was a God.*
 He was a God, who first reform'd our souls,
 And led us by philosophy and rules :
 From cares, and fears, and melancholy night,
 'To peace, to joy, to ease, and show'd us light.

CREECH.

243. 32. Poverty, in my sense of things, is a wretched and heavy burden.
244. 7. He who is wise, is wise to himself.
- ibid. 9. I hate the sophist, who is not wise to get something to himself.
- ibid. 20. Let others better mould the running mass
 Of metals, and inform the breathing brass,
 And soften into flesh a marble face,
 Plead better at the bar, describe the skies,
 And when the stars descend, and when they rise ;
 'The *gainful art* be thine, 'tis worthy thee. DRYDEN.
- ibid. 32. Sometimes they vulgar hit, sometimes they miss.
- ibid. 34. For, in religion, hypocrisy passeth for sincerity.
246. 34. Nor are we more greedy to get money than we ought to be.
- ibid. ult. Who is poor ? He who thinks himself poor.
250. 13. Now you have Lesbos, and fair Samos seen ;
 At Sardis, Colophon, and Smyrna been :
 What think'st thou, good Bullatius?—
- ibid. 19. Now you have Lew's, Muck, and St. Kilda seen ;
 At Moryen, Fingal's royal palace, been :
 What think'st thou of them, and of fair Southuist ?
254. 22. One crying in a desert ; or, empty chapel.

L E T T E R

To J—— M——, Esq.

ON THE

D E F E C T S

OF AN

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION,

And its unsuitableness to a Commercial People ; with the expediency and necessity of erecting at Glasgow an Academy for the Instruction of Youth.

Sir,

LAST time we were in company with you, you was pleased to express much surprise, “ that so few inhabitants of this city send their sons to the university !” And a friend of yours added, “ that such of us as had got a complete course of university education had generally little more knowledge or taste than those who never had that advantage.”

We are sensible that neither of you is singular in your opinion : Many have expressed the same surprise with less good humour than you did ; they have attempted to ridicule us, and seem to imagine, that our capacities are slower and our understandings duller than those of other men commonly are.

We readily acknowledge, that there is a good deal of truth in both the remarks. In proportion to its populousness, this city sends few scholars to the university ; and many who have been there are hardly to be distinguished from their fellow-citizens who were never at a college.

And yet we hope it is not difficult to make an apology for ourselves in both these particulars. We will tell you what we apprehend are the reasons that most of us who have had an university education are so little improved by it; when this is done, we imagine your wonder will cease, that so few among us choose to send their sons to a place where themselves reaped so little benefit; and we beg leave to acquaint you with a proposal that is talked of among our fellow-citizens, which, if it is gone into and properly executed, will put an end to your surprise, and will, we hope, in a short time, remove the ill-grounded reproach, "that our citizens are dull," as it will be an effectual and lasting method to improve our youth.

Candid people will presume or allow, that it is very unlikely the blame of our want of knowledge should lie all on one side; we think, that from our general conduct and transactions with the world, we have given little or no ground to have it suspected, that the size of our understanding is inferior to that of other men. If we have little taste or learning, the fault may be in some degree in our teachers; the things taught may be too abstruse to be understood, or such as must soon be forgot, being unsuitable to us, and having no relation to the circumstances and manner of life we are afterwards to be in.

That a great part of the course of philosophy taught at our university is of this nature, is but too obvious. It is evident, that the universities of Scotland in general, and particularly this of Glasgow, have been founded and designed purely or chiefly for the sake of that theology which was in vogue two or three hundred years ago: Some of the classes bear evident marks of this original design, being either totally or in part calculated for the disputes and wranglings of divines, and of little use to the lawyer or physician, and still less to the merchant or gentleman.

Of this sort we reckon logic and metaphysics, which

consumed one whole session at the university and part of another. These arts or sciences (for it is not yet agreed which of them they are) are to the greatest part of students quite unintelligible; and if they could be understood, we cannot for our life discover their use.

Nature has made all the chief pleasures of life easy to be got; she has also made all that knowledge which is generally useful easy to be attained: Did men observe this, they would soon discover what is the knowledge they ought to acquire and teach; but it has unluckily happened, that many who ought to have been wiser have ever neglected that knowledge which is obvious and useful, and have puzzled their brains to get what is difficult, metaphysical, and useless: From the difficulty they have found in acquiring it, they have concluded it must be important, and have taken much pleasure in conveying it to others; but if these learned gentlemen would but attend a little, they would soon see the unprofitableness of what they are accustomed so much to magnify. What ordinary company, what company of gentlemen is it where metaphysical disputes or the logic of the schools are ever so much as mentioned? Will a gentleman, by the deepest skill in them, make the better figure in the House of Commons, or appear with the more dignity at the bar? Will his eloquence in the pulpit be the more persuasive, or will he be the better skilled in the animal economy? Will metaphysics inspire him with devotion, give him a higher relish of virtue, or enable him to act with greater propriety in life? Or will the knowledge of them be of any advantage to the farmer, the architect, or the merchant? We apprehend, that none of these questions can be answered in the affirmative. And must acquirements, that are so confessedly of no use in life, that are never so much as talked of in good company, waste a year or two of a young man's time? Is life so long? Is time of so

little value, that there are not enow of useful studies to fill it up with? Must recourse be had to things which any well-bred man would be ashamed to have it suspected that he had ever employed his thoughts about?

We are very sorry to say, that if the time some of us attended the university, and spent so absurdly in hearing crabbed questions and metaphysical jargon, had been employed in teaching us ancient and modern history, and especially that of our own country, we should have been much more obliged to the learned professors; we should have been much better accomplished, and have appeared to be so in the judgment of those with whom we converse.

But logic and metaphysics, though they appear to us to be the most absurd, and consumed the greatest part of our time to no purpose, yet they were not the only things that wasted it at the university: The disquisitions we heard about the origin of moral virtue are little better remembered by us, and seem to be of little more use.

We are not ignorant, that the lectures on moral philosophy have for many years past been delivered in this university by very able masters, and in a very ingenious manner; and we are informed, that this was never more the case than it is at present: But we apprehend, these ingenious gentlemen have rather indulged their bias to some singular opinions of their own, than communicated much knowledge to even the most intelligent of their scholars. We suppose also, that as their disputes are so abstruse, and their theories about the foundation of morality so different, neither can be of much necessity or use.

One contends, that morality is founded in the will of God; another, in conformity to truth; a third, in the fitness and unfitness, or in the eternal and unalterable relations or differences of things; a fourth, in a moral sense or discernment, supposed to be na-

tural to the human mind; another establishes his system on sympathy. But whatever scheme the professor of morality contrives or embraces, he uses a long train of thin metaphysical reasoning to establish it, and spends a great part of the year in laying down arguments for, and answering objections against, his system;—arguments very pleasing, and perhaps intelligible to himself, as they are familiar to him, and he believes they will please and improve his pupils; but they are too subtle to be understood by them, and leave little or no impression upon any of their minds. Here, we imagine, there is much time lost, and pains misplaced. Might not these nice disquisitions about the foundation of morality be left out, or slightly skimmed over, and the students be just as knowing and as wise? How few of them are able to apprehend such arguments, or to pursue such reasoning? Might not the time be better spent in teaching them morality, in explaining the nature of the particular virtues? Would not this be more adapted to the capacity of the scholars, and incomparably more useful to them through the whole of life? And might not the professors easily pursue this simple and useful method of teaching? Ought they not to descend to it, instead of torturing their invention to establish what it is little matter whether it be established or not. There are objects, the nature of which may be easily understood, when their origin is in vain searched after. We should like better that geographer who describes exactly the course and soundings of St. Laurence or Senegal rivers, than another who tediously and minutely disputes about the precise spot where each of these rivers takes its rise. And we should not expect that a merchant would thrive, who, when he came to a river's mouth, delayed to load his ship with the commodities which had been brought down the river, or were produced upon its banks, till he had first traced the river upwards, and made him-

self sure of the place where it began. Whatever be the foundation of morality, the nature of the particular virtues may be described; the youth are capable of understanding them, though perhaps not able to enter into abstruse investigations about the origin of moral virtue. To know what virtue is, is useful to men in every station of life; but who is the better for having heard or understood a great many subtle disputes about its origin? For our parts, we should not grudge though the learned professor kept these entirely to himself, or he might, for his particular comfort and satisfaction, communicate his knotty ideas to that one of his scholars who has most connection with leading men, and has the best chance to be recommended to succeed him, and who will either espouse or think himself obliged to be at an immense labour to destroy the moral theory of his predecessor.

These different theories may be amusing to contemplative minds, and for aught we know, there may be some truth in each of them, and at bottom they may be less inconsistent with one another than they appear to be; but whether they be or be not inconsistent; whether any of them or none of them is true, we will be bold to say, that no one of them, after so much time and pains spent upon it, ever enabled that scholar who understood it best to restrain a single passion, or to perform one virtuous action. And we shall surely be thought to have kept within bounds, while we pronounce no more concerning the above-mentioned dry parts of science than one who is esteemed a good judge has done, with respect to a long and complete course of university education: "It would be hard to say what one duty of society, or what one office as a citizen, a student is qualified to discharge or sustain, after his close application of so many years."

Some of us were the scholars of an illustrious teacher of morality, himself a perfect and ready master of

Greek and Latin. He introduced or revived a high taste for classical learning in this place; and while he lived he kept it alive. If ever a professor had the art of communicating knowledge, and of raising an esteem and desire of it in the minds of his scholars; if ever one had the magical power to inspire the noblest sentiments, and to warm the hearts of youth with the admiration and love of virtue; if ever one had the art to create an esteem of liberty, and an abhorrence and contempt of tyranny and tyrants, he was the man. What pity was it, that for three or four months a-year such superior talents should have been thrown away on metaphysical and fruitless disputations! When these were got over, how delightful and edifying was it to hear him! If we did not make some improvement during the few remaining months of the session, the fault, we acknowledge, was in ourselves; and perhaps our docility was lessened, and our minds stupified, as we had the year before been accustomed to hear lectures, which neither deserved nor caught our attention. For the moral disputes, as that gentleman managed them (though, as we have hinted, something really useful ought to have been taught instead of them), were not reckoned so insipid as the logical and metaphysical. We can yet remember, that had the regulations of the college permitted that students might have gone directly from the languages to ethics, many in this city, who looked upon logic and metaphysics as futile and unintelligible, would have sent their children to him. In that case, they would have had an advantage that was much desired; their children would have both heard the lectures at one hour, and have been examined upon them at another; whereas, by the rules, except they had been first at the logic class, they could but hear the lectures.

But besides the intricacy of the things taught, there was another cause why most of us imbibed but little

knowledge at the university: Our professors loved rank, and kept themselves at a greater distance from their scholars than common schoolmasters do. This hindered them from knowing our genius or particular turn, and directing us to a proper course of reading. When we left the university, we were totally unacquainted with history: We had formed no plan of moral or of natural knowledge: Had our teachers been at a little pains with us, they might easily have discerned the bent of our genius, and what natural capacity each of us had; from our circumstances, they might have formed probable conjectures what business in life we were designed for; and they might have directed us to the books proper to be read: We are of opinion, that the usefulness of public teachers lies in this as much as in delivering their lectures, and perhaps more. By some pains taken in this manner, scholars might in a few years attain more real and distinct knowledge than without such direction they are ever like to attain in their lives. We say this, as we have often done, from deep-felt experience. We were, when young, greedy of knowledge, and continually reading something or other; but nobody was so kind to advise us and set us on a right track. We hope we are not vain in imagining, that if our diligence in pursuit of knowledge had been well directed, when our memories were strong, our thirst after knowledge great, and our minds free from cares, we might have made some sort of progress in literature; but this was not done, which we deeply regret, and must regret while we have breath.

Our teachers however professed to be great admirers of the ancients; but they were too proud or too lazy to imitate them. Did they satisfy themselves with delivering a dry discourse on philosophy, containing ideas to which their pupils were strangers? Did they reckon the business of the day over when the hour was run? Did they expect to convey new

and cramp notions in such a hurry into the young mind? Was this all that was done by Zeno in the stoa, by Plato in the academy, or by Epicurus in his gardens? No, they did much more; they threw aside all distant and magisterial airs; they put themselves on a level with their scholars; they walked and conversed familiarly with them; they led their minds in an easy and gradual manner to the perception of truth; and by conversing and repeating over and over the same point, made them thoroughly to understand it, and fixed it in their memories.

If the learned gentlemen we speak of had but considered how little they were able to recollect of a set discourse, or of the best sermon they ever heard, we are persuaded their method of teaching would have appeared imperfect even to themselves.

We mention but another cause of our having made so little progress, and it is this: We were set on too many different branches of knowledge at the same time; there was an odd sort of emulation industriously excited among us; it was esteemed honourable to attend many classes; it was thought shameful, and a mark of poverty, to be at few: Most of the students in the three upper classes were one hour at Latin, one at Greek, one at mathematics, and one or two at philosophy, all in the same day; and this method was continued through the whole session; by which means our attention was so divided, and our minds so distracted with a jumble of different things, that not one of them took hold of us; and it was next to impossible, that even those of us who wished and endeavoured to learn could succeed. This produced a lasting bad effect; an inclination to ramble in pursuit of knowledge stuck fast with us after we left the university. We had been taught to be fond of a fault into which from laziness or vanity we might naturally have fallen. We could not endure constancy and assiduity; we soon became weary of any

one thing; and as we had been long obliged and accustomed to do so, we skipped hastily from one sort of reading to another; an error which we have not yet been able thoroughly to correct. It is however manifest, that one thing at a time ought principally to have been inculcated; but we who ourselves contrive schemes of profit, can easily see for whose benefit the multiplicity of private classes was first set on foot, and continues still to be pursued.

The things we have slightly noticed will in some sort account for the small morsel of knowledge most of us brought from the seat of learning; and if we in the city have little erudition, our college-companions in the country have not more: We must, and we will affirm, that it is very rare to find a country gentleman bred at the same university, who is in taste and in extent of knowledge any degree above ourselves, though they have had much more leisure to pursue knowledge than suited with our active and busy way of life; a presumption, both that the things taught were improper, and that the method of teaching them laboured under some essential defect. Nay, we must be forgiven to say it, the learned professors seem to be convinced of all this, and to be of the same opinion with ourselves. They had lately two vacancies in the university in their own disposal: They looked round the country, and considered the abilities of all the clergymen and students who had been educated by themselves; and among such a great number, they could find none, that, even in their own opinion, were qualified to fill them. They made choice of a clergyman at a great distance, and of a student, who both of them had got their education at other universities; by which step, they reflected all the honour they could on these two worthy men; but at the same time made an open and candid acknowledgment of the wretchedness of their plan, and of their own debility and ill success at begetting

knowledge in the minds of their scholars ; like frigid or impotent people, who are forced to adopt strangers into their family, being incapable to beget any children of their own.

The faults in education we have mentioned have had bad effects on all sorts of people who resort or have resorted to the university, the clergy themselves not excepted ; and we own, they have had very bad effects upon ourselves. The things taught are abstruse and dark ; and it is little to be wondered at if we brought no knowledge of them away with us : If any of us brought away some knowledge of them, it is as little to be wondered if we soon lost it : It was of such a nature as to be easily forgot ; it was so remote from common use, that it could not be remembered.

Though we have been at some pains to acquire a little knowledge from books and company, we are sensible, that in writing this letter we give but too manifest proofs of the defectiveness of our education. But still we believe this was no ways owing to our want of natural capacity. Our city can boast, that it has produced as complete burghesses, and gentlemen of as refined and enlarged understandings, as any in the island ; that is, when they were educated or improved at other places.

What we have said is not with a view to depreciate an university education, but to apologise for ourselves, and to remove, Sir, your surprize at our little knowledge, and that so few of us send our sons to the university : And by this time we hope our apology will appear to be pretty complete ; an apology which we have been forced to make. When we saw the laugh raised against our town in almost every company of strangers, and heard ourselves so often and so groundlessly reproached for want of taste, we judged it was but a piece of justice to ourselves and our fellow-citizens, to open our minds to a gentleman.

of your discernment and candour; and when the causes of what we are blamed for are laid open, though not near so fully as we could easily have done, equitable judges will cease to rally us. But if we shall be afterwards reproached upon the same score, we will beg leave in our turn openly to express our surprise, that it should ever be expected by any man of sober sense, that we should send our sons to waste a year or two of their lives in learning things so useless, absurd, and ridiculous, as technical logic and metaphysical speculations are confessed to be. We attend to them with reluctance and disgust; we have now hardly any traces of them in our minds; and can we think that our children will be more pleased with them, or remember them better?

The sensible part of mankind will, we hope, agree with us, that education ought to be calculated for the times we live in; that the aim of it should be to make the youth good men, and useful subjects; to prepare them to acquit themselves well in the particular business they are to live by, and to make a manly and decent figure in the companies they may be in. We think it manifest, that the musty and intricate parts of science we have mentioned, are no ways subservient to any of these ends.

We are generally a commercial people; except in matters of commerce, our ideas are pretty much circumscribed. The thoughts of great numbers among us move in no very wide circle, and never towards metaphysics. We figure not to ourselves any very wide or noble plan of education, which might dignify high life, but would be merely imaginary and unattainable in our circumstances: To these our education must be suitable. The things taught us ought to be such as immediately fit us for business; or are some way relative to our employment, or analogous to that range of thought to which our business may be supposed naturally to lead us; or which may adorn con-

versation, and free us from the imputation of ignorance.

What these branches of knowledge are it is not difficult to see ; practical mathematics, history in general, the history of our own country, and of those in the neighbourhood, or with which we carry on commerce, natural history, geography, the history of commerce, and practical morality. Were there any doubt about the parts of science that are properest to be taught us, it might be removed by observing, that those of us who are studious naturally apply to some of the branches we have just mentioned. Many in this city, without any advantages in their youth, have by their own good sense and the dint of application, made a very considerable progress in the knowledge of history, belles lettres, and mathematics ; but we know none who ever turned their heads to ideal entities, or to quibble-syllogisms. And if we had an opportunity of such a course of education, our city would soon show to the world, that the desire and taste of useful and attainable knowledge are as general among us as in any other city whatsoever, that is but equally populous.

Some eight or ten years ago, the principal and professors of the Marischal College at Aberdeen, “ in order to render the study of the sciences more natural and progressive, did unanimously agree to depart from the old plan, and from that time forth to observe a very different order. They continued indeed to teach the classical learning as formerly, but instead of logic and metaphysics, they appointed that year to be spent in teaching history, geography, chronology, an introduction to natural history ; and that all the students of that class should attend the lessons of the professor of mathematics : That the next year be employed in natural philosophy, and the laws of matter and motion ; in mechanics, hydrostatics, pneumatics, optics, and astronomy ; and that the last year of the course be allowed to the study of the abstract sciences,

pneumatology, morals, logic, or the art of reasoning." A considerable improvement in the method of teaching, and which does honour to the gentlemen who appointed it.

We were very much encouraged when first we heard that the Marishal College had so far thrown back useless things, and accommodated their course to modern times. There appeared to be so much good sense in what they had done, the alterations they had made were so visibly advantageous and necessary, that we made no doubt but our university would immediately follow so edifying an example, and would make further improvements upon it: But after we had waited for some time, we were entirely damped, when upon inquiry we were informed that the professors were not to depart a hair-breadth from their plan and practice. They are it seems tied down either by custom, or by inclination, or by rules, to observe a course of teaching, a great part of which is at this time of day useless and absurd, and more especially so with respect to us.

We do assure you, Sir, that when we saw that no relief was to be expected from the university, we were in distress for our children, and felt, perhaps too strongly, some emotions of indignation against the learned professors, whom we looked upon as stubbornly tenacious of their own antiquated plan. We had frequent conversations with one another, expressing our grief that this was the case; and some of us were then pretty much inclined to provide a proper remedy, and to remove, at our own expence, the inconveniency to which our youth were exposed. But through a multiplicity of business, and want of sufficient harmony among ourselves, we allowed our good purposes to cool; and with respect to so important a design, suffered ourselves to relapse into a lethargic inactivity, for which we frankly own we do not know what excuse to make.

What we wished for and intended was, to have in this city a school or academy for instructing our youth in that knowledge which is proper to give them an early liking to religion and virtue; that which will fit them for business, and enable them to discharge the duties of life with honour, and appear to advantage in the world.

We were roused from our lethargy, when we saw the royal burgh of Perth beforehand with us in establishing such an academy as we wished for. Sensible of the like disadvantages we complain of, they have set us a pattern highly worthy of our imitation. The magistrates of that town, assisted by a worthy clergyman in the place, have, like gentlemen of taste, and men of the world at the same time, generously provided for the education of youth: An exertion of public spirit for which children and parents will esteem and honour them at present, and which in time to come will be remembered as a monument of their good sense and provident care of posterity.

Their aim is, “to train up young people for business and active life; or to give such a practical and compendious course of education as may in some measure qualify the gentleman, the merchant, or even the mechanic, to act with greater advantage in their respective stations: For this purpose the town-council have fixed upon two masters, with each a salary of 50 l. besides a gratuity of two guineas to be paid at the entry of each student to each master for the session; which is to begin every year on the first of October, and to continue till the end of May.

One of the masters is to deliver, 1. A short history of philosophy, and the rise and progress of arts and sciences; 2. A course of natural history, in which he gives an idea of botany and the animal economy; 3. A compendious view of poetry, rhetoric, logic, and moral philosophy; and, 4. A course of chronology and civil history, ancient and modern, especially the

history of Britain, with regard to its constitution, political interest, and commerce.

The other master is to teach, 1. Arithmetic ; 2. Book-keeping ; 3. A course of mathematics ; and, 4. A course of natural philosophy, illustrated by experiments. Each of the masters is to finish his whole course in two sessions, if possible ; otherwise, what remains is to be gone through, at proper times, in a subsequent session, without any further charge to the student. A writing-master is to attend the academy every day ; and a teacher is to read the superior Greek and Latin classics one hour every morning with such of the students as would make further progress in the languages. Both these masters to be paid by the students.

The instruments for the experimental part they are to purchase by contribution, and have already about 200 guineas subscribed for that purpose. Their first session begins in October." This is their plan. It is no doubt well contrived for that place. It has nothing in it that can be called useless or superfluous ; every thing to be taught has a tendency to the end proposed. But it may be proper to vary a little from it, and to make some additions in an academy here.

Writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, and also some parts of mathematics, are here taught in private schools ; history, chronology, and most of the other parts mentioned in the Perth scheme, are hardly even attempted : The things taught are necessary to accomplish a merchant's clerk ; the things hitherto neglected would form the merchant for extensive business and for manly conversation : And it is unquestionably by teaching the historical and philosophical things that a school either obtains or deserves the name of an academy.

Writing, arithmetic, and book-keeping, may be left to be taught as before ; and then two masters will, with the greater success, manage the remaining parts.

The province of the one will be, 1. Mathematics; 2. Geography; 3. Natural history; and, 4. Natural philosophy, illustrated by experiments.

The province of the other will be nearly as in the plan of Perth; 1. History of philosophy, and the rise and progress of arts and sciences; 2. A compendious view of poetry, rhetoric, and moral philosophy; 3. A course of chronology and civil history, ancient and modern, especially the history of Britain.

The business of the one master will be, besides mathematics, to teach the most entertaining and useful parts of natural philosophy; that of the other will be chiefly history.

We are persuaded that every impartial person will see at once the great and remarkable utility of such a course of education, and the propriety of erecting such an academy in this place, as soon as it can be conveniently done.

The town of Perth, however considerable in itself, is small in comparison of this populous, wealthy, and thriving city: The same encouragement that is given by them would be a very light burden upon us, whether it were given out of the revenues of the city, or contributed by a number of the most opulent citizens. But as a far greater number of students would attend the academy here, less salary to the teachers might serve the purpose; nay, there is great reason to believe, that if the magistrates and principal inhabitants will, as we hope, countenance the project, in a very few years little or no salary at all may be necessary.

This plan will interfere but little with that of the university. The aims are quite different and distinct; what is designed by the academy is, to train up young people for business and active life; the aim of the university is, to make scholars of them: And no doubt a great adept in scholastical learning is still to be made by some skill in the learned languages, and by a long and laborious course of study. This we easily dis-

cern; the clergy are ordinarily the people who study longest, and inquire deepest into science; they do it, or begin to do it, at the university; and when vacancies happen in universities, generally speaking, they can only be supplied from the clergy, or by such as have been educated to be clergymen. But the education we propose is compendious, and of general use; our school will not keep any student from the university, who is intent on making a great figure by deep and metaphysical researches; and we are sure the professors are more disinterested than to wish any scholar should consume four or five years at their colleges without being better accomplished for conversation, or more prepared for the employment by which he proposes to live.

We allow the excellence of professed scholars, and shall leave it to colleges to fill their heads with materials for argumentation. We propose no such thing; and therefore we persuade ourselves that the masters, who love every branch of knowledge, will encourage our plan, and give us their best advice; and we submit it to themselves, if it would not be worthy the generosity of such patrons of science to apply some portion of their large revenues to begin and carry on so useful and necessary a project.

But though, contrary to our intention, our plan should seem to interfere a little with that of the university, or threaten to keep some scholars from them, this ought not to discourage us, nor to put the professors into any ill humour: Sensible that they need such a motive to rouse them to more activity, they should, for their own honour and usefulness, wish us success. Both they and the teachers of the academy will the more exert themselves, when they know that their honour and their interest too depend upon their activity and diligence.

It is a vulgar error to believe that teachers of religion, different from the established one, are in all re-

spects hurtful. The reformed have forced the catholics to throw aside many of their absurdities, and have stirred them up to search for more knowledge. The dissenters in England have contributed to promote the learning and sobriety of the churchmen; and perhaps even the seceders in Scotland have, by their strictness, stimulated some of the established clergy to a strictness and diligence in their office beyond what they might otherwise have attained.

The masters of an university need such a stimulus as much as the teachers of religion. When men have got into a settled way of life, laziness often gets the better of the good purposes they really had when they first entered into it. The sense of duty and the love of fame are not able to overcome the love of ease. It is the opinion of some intelligent persons, that if the established clergy, instead of having salaries fixed for life, were hired from time to time, we should get better sermons from them than even those we get at present. Whatever truth there may be in this, we are persuaded there is much more in the remark, when applied to the masters of a college. They have their fine lodgings, and they have their fixed salaries as the clergy have: But the clergy have one strong motive to spur them on which the professors have not; there are other clergymen just at hand, and if any one is very lazy and negligent, the people will leave him; but be the professors ever so slothful, there is no college near to receive the students from them. Could the youth be taught by others at as little expence to their parents, the professors would be at more pains, and bestir themselves in a very different manner.

We have said thus much in general, to prevent some prejudices that might have been conceived against our plan, as if it were to interfere with the university; and we have shown, that instead of being hurtful to that learned body of men, it will produce very salutary effects upon them; and we hope it may reason-

ably be presumed, that by the activity of our teachers, and the constant and close application of their scholars, more real and useful knowledge may be delivered and acquired in two years, than can be in six or seven in the disputatious and slow method usual in universities, where there are so few hours of teaching, and so many of diversion.

It has been observed already, that the principal points in view in the education of youth ought to be to form them to the love of religion and virtue, to render them servicable to the government, useful to themselves and to that society to which they may more immediately belong, and agreeable in the ordinary commerce of life.

With respect to forming our youth to be good subjects, this plan needs make no provision. The inhabitants of this city, and of all the country around, are almost to a man well affected to the present government, and, were it necessary, would risk their fortunes and their lives in its support. Though we think young people ought to be made acquainted with the nature of that happy constitution under which we live; and this may be advantageously done, in reading to them the history of our own country.

But religion merits the most serious attention. It is judged to be a great defect in the ordinary education, that, except those who formally set themselves to the study of divinity, no care is taken to acquaint the students with religious principles, or to tincture them with a sense of piety. Religion takes faster hold of the mind, and has a stronger tendency to make men good and virtuous, than many seem to imagine. It is of infinite importance, with respect to the other world; and it is the most powerful restraint to preserve youth from those vices which they are but too ready to fall into; vices which are both heinous, and hinder them from making that figure in the world which they are entitled to make. A sense of God

makes the life sober and regular. Parents ought to recommend religion to their children, and all teachers should, both by example and instruction, show their scholars that they have a high esteem of religion, and a deep sense of its importance to promote all the valuable interests of mankind.

We have lately seen a printed Sermon upon the Causes of the Decline of Religion, and we verily expected to find one thing assigned as a cause of that decline, which has been and continues to be much talked of and much lamented in this place, but which it seems the author did not advert to. If he had pleased, he might have mentioned the bad discipline of colleges, and the too little appearance of piety in the deportment of the masters, which, though perhaps not so extensive, is as real a cause of irreligion as any he has named. It produces very dismal effects; the students, who afterwards apply to divinity, are cool and indifferent in the study of it; those who apply to business, in town or country, bring along with them from the college a visible aversion to religion; and with this pernicious contagion they infect the unwary who see or converse with them.

The blunt saying of a plain and honest citizen, some time after public prayers began to be disused in the university, was quite agreeable to our sentiments. When he was entering his son to one of the philosophy classes, "I am indifferent, (said he) I am indifferent about your nice disputes: Teach my son religion and morality; teach him to govern his passions, and to love God and men: I had rather have him a pious and good man than possessed of all the curious philosophy you can teach him in seven years."

Religion ought to be the ground-work of every course of education, and the principles instilled into the minds of young people should be scriptural and sound. This is certainly right in every view. We have known some young men who were marred in

their business, and rejected by those who could have advanced them, merely because they were much suspected of entertaining some very loose and unsound opinions.

But to consider religion in the lowest view, namely, as it is a science and a subject of conversation, the youth ought certainly to be taught it. Every gentleman and merchant should be able to talk about the tenets of that religion which is established in his country: He should know something about the government and discipline of that church of which he is a member.

We should weary out your patience, Sir, and protract this letter to an indecent length, were we to mention the use of every particular branch of literature proposed to be taught by the projected plan; and were we to show how well this plan will answer the remaining ends of education; namely, to prepare young people to be useful in life, and to appear as accomplished gentlemen in conversation. We will, in a few words, take notice of the advantages which a plan of this sort has effectually to communicate the knowledge which is proposed to be taught by it.

1. The things to be taught are all of them capable of being learned. They are commensurate to the capacity of the young mind. Logical quiddities and metaphysical subtleties are totally exterminated. History, geography, the natural productions of a country, the manners of the people, the manufactures and commodities they trade in, may all be understood and remembered. These are things useful to be known by a commercial people. And, by the way, we beg leave to say, that if merchants have not dipped much into metaphysical and moral theories, they have by their voyages and travels furnished the world with a far more valuable sort of knowledge; we mean that of the manners and customs of men, which is cer-

tainly more entertaining, and perhaps lays a surer foundation of morality than any of the cobweb schemes which have been so finely spun out of the imaginations of fanciful men, who have all their lives been immured within a college, and are quite destitute of the knowledge of the world.

2. We are almost certain of having the ablest teachers the nation can afford. They will readily be left to be chosen and employed by us. A place in an university is considered as easy, honourable, and lucrative. It is almost looked upon as a sinecure; it is not ordinarily the most ingenious and able for teaching that is pitched upon, but he who is connected, or whose friends are connected with, and can serve the men in power; and this appears to be growing more and more in fashion. When a vacancy happens, we hear every one saying, "Who will get this place? who has most interest with such a duke or such a lord?" A man's sufficiency is seldom or never mentioned; his ability is no recommendation of him; his total ignorance of the things he is to teach is no obstacle to his being preferred to the office: For twenty years past, there are not above one or two instances where one was either presented by the crown, or chosen by the faculty, merely or chiefly because he was thought best qualified to teach the class he was called to teach. If there are any who are fit to teach, by a proper encouragement we may have them.

But the directors of the academy, besides capacity to teach, must have other qualifications: They must be men of a grave and respectable character, who will add weight and importance to the things they teach, and attract the esteem and love of their scholars. The professors in our time, to do them justice, seemed well enough qualified in this respect. Several of the things taught by them were, as we have said, absolute futilities; and yet even in these things,

from the solemnity of the teachers, we at that time suspected there might be some value in them, or perhaps their diligence in teaching conferred some imaginary worth on every thing they taught. We have often observed, that the earnest application of teachers to their business procures them reputation, and adds weight to the most frivolous and insignificant things that may be delivered by them. The men were guilty of no littleness or folly; they were men of exterior dignity, and we could not but pay some regard to every thing they said or did. Teachers of that sort, when the knowledge communicated by them is useful and suitable, do successfully recommend knowledge and virtue; and by their regular, decent, and religious behaviour, they create a liking of religion in the hearts of their scholars.

3. The hours of teaching in the designed academy will be more than are allotted to it in colleges. It is absurd and hypocritical for men to give high commendations of science, and to use so slender pains, and spend so little time in teaching it. Men are become so lazy, and the desire of literature is so feeble, that it is a wonder if knowledge of every sort does not take its flight from amongst us. The practice of universities is quite altered; not one half of the hours are employed in teaching that were one hundred, and not a third of them that were two hundred years ago. The president de Mesmes showed a manuscript of one of his ancestors to Mr. Rollin, wherein that ancient gentleman gave an account of his studies at the university of Toulouse: "In 1545 (says he) I was sent to Toulouse with my preceptor and brother to study law, under the direction of an old grey-haired man, who had travelled much. We got up at four, and having said our prayers, we began our studies at five, with our great books under our arms, and our writing-tables and candlesticks in our hands. We attended at lectures till ten without intermission; then

we went to dinner, after having hastily collated for one half-hour what we had writ down. After dinner, by way of diversion, we read Sophocles, or Aristophanes, or Euripides, and sometimes Demosthenes, Tully, Virgil, and Horace. At one o'clock to our studies again, at five we returned home, to repeat and turn to the places quoted in our books till after six, then we supped and read somewhat in Greek and Latin." Such pains and time were then bestowed.

But in our university several of the masters do not teach above one hour, and others of them but two hours a-day. Do they really expect to convey the knowledge of any thing so hastily, especially of the dark and intricate points they usually teach? And we cannot but observe, that they treat their students as if they were men and children at the same time. A noble lord made a donation of the college-garden to the masters and to the students to walk in for their health and recreation. The students, even those who entered to the lower classes, it is pretended, were then men, and had discretion not to destroy the beauty or policy of the garden. They are now very young when they enter to these classes, and the masters have deprived all the students of the liberty of stepping into the garden, which by the donation they had and still have a legal title to. In another respect they treat the very youngest of their scholars as if they were full-grown men; they teach them an hour or two, and then send them adrift; and they are so thoughtless, are so little looked after, and have so much time to play, that the lesson so hastily read over to them is neglected and immediately forgot. In the case of the garden, it argues the superiority of the masters to treat their scholars as mere children; in the matter of teaching, it contributes to their ease to treat them as if they were men.

The teaching for so few hours in colleges has a very fatal effect upon children: By getting so much

diversion, they contract settled habits of inattention, and their minds are so dissipated, that it is oftentimes found impossible to fix them; by which means many have been ruined, and could never afterwards, by all the arts and entreaties of their parents, be brought to apply themselves in earnest to any business whatsoever.

Common sense would dictate, that the two lower classes, at least, ought to be treated as children are in other schools; they ought to be kept as it were under the rod, and obliged to apply to their business for four or five hours a day: And so many hours of attendance, at the fewest, shall, it is proposed, be given by every teacher in the designed academy.

4. Our teachers shall study the genius, and learn the views of each particular scholar, and direct them to a proper course of reading when they are at home. We suffered so much ourselves through want of such direction, that we will be at the utmost pains that our children may not suffer as we have done. The teachers will put those books into their hands which are most accommodated to their genius, and relative to the business they are designed for. They will converse often and familiarly with them, and twice every week will, in an easy manner, inquire into the progress they have made, and cause them to make observations themselves upon what they have been reading. Possessed of such accomplishments as we have mentioned, they will be in no dread of being puzzled by the questions that may be put to them by sprightly lads of fourteen or fifteen, nor under any necessity of concealing their ignorance by an affected gravity, and entrenching themselves behind a form.

5. To confuse or distract the minds of the youth by different studies at the same time, will be avoided with the most scrupulous care. All possible art will be used to make what is the immediate and principal study of the scholars amusing and delightful to

them: The other things, that are allowed them by way of diversion, will always have some relation to the one thing which is at that particular time the chief object of their pursuit.

These are certainly great and visible advantages which scholars at the academy will enjoy above those who attend the university. The things to be taught are plain and important. The best qualified men will teach them. The hours of attendance will be more than double those that are given at the university. The teachers will converse familiarly with the scholars, and direct them to a proper course of reading. Confusion of studies will be cautiously avoided, and all will be done in a clear and expressive English style.

They propose at Perth, no doubt for very good reasons in their situation, to have a teacher of the superior classics. We confess we do not see the propriety or necessity of such a teacher in the academy here. We think it ought to be an English academy, and that the chief design of it should be to train up young people for business. Indeed many of our citizens have found, that their children had less Latin when they left the humanity class than when they entered to it; and every body is convinced, that in the two years spent at Greek and Latin in the university, a very poor proficiency is made in comparison of what might well be expected. But this great evil would be best remedied by childrens staying a year or even two years longer at the grammar-school; in which two years they would certainly acquire more skill in the learned languages than they could possibly do in six or seven at the university: And if the rector can discharge his present office, and also teach a superior class, we are informed he is very well qualified to do it. But if it is necessary there be another to teach the higher classics along with him, a very particular search should be made to find a proper

person ; he must be a man of taste and imagination : It is not difficult to find one who can drudge and labour, and by the help of grammars and dictionaries can hammer out the construction, and heavily tell his scholars the meaning of an author ; these are commodities not rare to be found, but such a one is far from answering to the idea we have of a teacher of the superior classics : He should be a man of sense and genius, of spirit and vivacity, who feels the author's sense, who imagines himself in the place of the poet, and is warm with his fire ; who discerns, who sees and feels the beauty of the historian's description. In short, one who feels the very sentiments of the historian or poet, and transfuses them into the minds and hearts of his pupils. We would have him at the same time to have discretion enough to pass over several parts of Ovid, Horace, and Catullus, which, were they taught in a spirited manner, might be dangerous to young people. A dull phlegmatic teacher may seem to have some advantage in this respect : He can read over the whole of Horace, and not miss a line from beginning to end, without a smile : He can explain and comment upon the most licentious passage without feeling himself, and without exciting in his scholars any disorderly emotion ; but then he feels as little and makes as little impression with respect to any the most beautiful picture or striking description : In reading the passages of a tragedy or epic poem, which shake the human frame, and fill the throbbing breast with the alternate emotions of admiration, terror, pity, and distress, his heart is quite unmoved, insensible, and callous. Such a one can never teach to advantage, nor excite admiration of ancient learning in the minds of youth : They weary, and think it is doing penance to hear him.

A teacher of spirit and taste fires his pupils with the love of classical learning : And though it is di-

gressing a little from our principal point, we cannot but take notice, that such a teacher would be of unspeakable advantage to those in higher life than we are. If gentlemens sons made a competent progress in classical learning, and were besides instructed in the several things proposed to be taught at the academy, we aver they would have a far more complete and genteel school education than has ever been publicly given in this country.

And such a teacher of Greek and Latin should be carefully sought for, on account of those students who are designed for any of the learned professions, and especially of those who are to be clergymen: For as education is so tedious, and is become so expensive, we think that divines may and ought to be trained up in this method. When they are well founded in the languages, they may by proper direction be taught as much knowledge, and to express themselves with as much propriety, precision, and force, as divines ordinarily attain, in one third part of the time which they would be obliged to attend a divinity college: And if they were found to be as knowing as college students, we do not see but presbyteries might get over any difficulty in licensing them; provided always their morals be good and their principles orthodox. For which purpose we would have the gentleman who has the direction of their studies sound above all suspicion, even though he should not be so deep in learning as we could wish.

For it would seem, that in divinity it is the genius or the application of the student, and not the ability of the professor, that produces the effect. We have heard some of our divinity professors much run-down, and others as much applauded; but we could never see this difference by the effects of their teaching, or that those who studied under the weak professor were a whit inferior to those who were the scholars of the able one: Nor indeed do we discern that these preach-

ers appear worse in the pulpit or in company who were never at a divinity college at all, several of whom we know and esteem.

In things that relate to divinity, the learned professors seem to think in this manner: For three or four times, they have chosen Hebrew professors, who, except the letters, were said to know no more of the language; and church-history, though they have a professor of it, has not been taught for many years past: It is supposed, that one may teach Hebrew without knowing it; and that divines may know church-history without being taught it: Just as the little or great ability of the divinity professor makes no alteration upon the scholar.

But if it is so with respect to divinity and what relates to it, the case is quite different with respect to a professor of mathematics: Whether he has or has not the art of teaching, is manifestly known by the great or small proficiency which his scholars make. It is impossible that those who study at one university should be generally good mathematicians; and that those who study at another should generally know nothing of the matter, if the professors were equally skilful and diligent in teaching. The gentleman who has long taught in this university has unquestionably great ability; but whether he has run over the propositions in too great a hurry, or has employed too few hours in teaching, it is a well-known fact, which we are sorry to mention, that he has had little success in teaching: There are extremely few who have been made mathematicians by him. We mention this, because if the two masters under whose direction the academy is proposed to be shall be thought to have too much to do, there may be, without any additional expence, a teacher of mathematics alone. If he has only the countenance of the magistrates, such numbers will attend him, that he will not need a halfpenny of salary: And if he has the

art of teaching (which he must have, otherwise it were better not to have him), we may reasonably expect, in a very few years, to furnish out a choice of able mathematicians to the university, and save them the trouble of going to a great distance in quest of one.

The plan, as we have spoken of it, extends to fewer parts of literature than that of Perth; yet we persuade ourselves every one must be convinced of the advantage and necessity of it; and if possible we wish to see it established, or at least begun this very season.

Many branches of manufactures have been introduced, and many have been pushed as far by the inhabitants of this city as has been done by any in the kingdom; and if we should make no provision for the instruction of our youth, when such provision is so necessary, we should but too justly deserve reproach.

But from the opulence of this city, we cannot but indulge the hope, that the academy here will be more extensive than that which has been agreed upon by the people of Perth. We wish the French language was taught more perfectly than has yet been done here: It has become almost an universal language, and the knowledge of it is particularly useful to trading people; and especially we wish that there were an English belles lettres education. Except to gentlemen, and to those in the learned professions, the learned languages are not necessary. A man may make himself master of an immense variety of knowledge without any other language but English: And of how great importance would it be if young people were made acquainted with the beauties of the English poets and most elegant prose writers, and were taught something of composition in their own language. To know their own language well is of more importance to them than even the most full

and accurate knowledge of Greek and Latin : While they applied to the study of it, they would be taught not words but things, not style only but to see and feel the most noble sentiments, and to express themselves with elegance and force.

It is really astonishing that the study of the national language has been so much neglected, and that a course of education, proper for men of business, entirely in English, has never been set on foot. If we were not accustomed to see the thing every day practised, it would appear absurd to the last degree, that children, who are to be put to business as soon as their age permits, should spend five or six years in learning dead languages ; languages, which it is foreseen they will immediately forget when they go from school, and which, though they could be remembered, can never be of any use to them. If that time were employed in conveying ideas into their minds, as they are capable to receive them, and in teaching them the English language, they would have more knowledge, and they would acquire a great facility of writing and speaking what they know. If they were first taught to pronounce justly, and were then set to compose little things, and to imitate the style of Mr. Addison, Dr. Swift, and some others, the letters of men of business would appear to much more advantage than some of them do at present. There would not be so frequent complaints that people do not write to their friends at a distance ; the real cause of which oftentimes is, that they have neither a competent stock of ideas, nor a sufficient command of language. To write a letter of news, of friendship, of thanks, or congratulation, is above their capacity, or is at best a tedious and difficult task. If children were properly instructed in their mother-tongue, they would not, when they became men, falter and hesitate in speech, but would express their meaning with ease and beauty.

The taste which has been raised at Edinburgh by

Mr. Sheridan should excite our emulation. The parts of science we have mentioned before are absolutely necessary; this last is also highly useful and highly ornamental.

The plan, Sir, which we have laid before you, is neither chimerical nor difficult to be executed; it is easy, advantageous, necessary, and not expensive; and we cannot suffer ourselves to fear but that our city will immediately agree to it, or to something like it: For our own part, we have merely studied the honour and advantage of our fellow-citizens. We desire no commendation for having mentioned to several of them the great advantages of such an academy. If we are in the right, you will be able to judge by this Letter, which you are at liberty to use as you please. There are no doubt others of our citizens who are both able to form a plan that is more complete, and also to forward the execution of it; let them have the whole praise, but let the thing be done, and done as soon as possible.

And we think ourselves sure that it will be done, when we consider the merit and vigilance of the honourable gentlemen who are our present magistrates. One of them is illustrious in his own city, is well known at a great distance, and has been long respected by those in the highest rank; he had a college education, but soon saw the impropriety and defectiveness of it; and, by a strength of judgment, a depth of penetration, and retentiveness of memory peculiar to himself, he attained a knowledge of the laws and constitution of his country, which is seldom to be found in professed lawyers: He has acquired such variety of knowledge, moral, historical, political, and commercial, and is so distinct and accurate upon every point, that few burghesses or others in the island can pretend to excel him. What is proposed to be taught at the academy is but the rudiments of a few of these parts, in each of which he is a master.

We have another gentleman in public office, who is also justly looked upon as a very extraordinary and happy genius. His skill in commerce is extensive; his invention of new branches of manufacture fertile; his activity to promote them unwearied; his generosity and public spirit are discerned and honoured by several of the nobility, and by many of the gentry and men of taste, who court his company: He is possessed of such accomplishments in science and taste, which, by a quick discernment, he saw the value of, and acquired, that did he not by a singular greatness of mind acknowledge the disadvantages of his education, hardly any body that converses with him would suspect but that he had been conversant in literary contemplations from his earliest youth.

We have besides many citizens whose knowledge is extensive, and whose elegance of taste is undisputed. The magistrates and they will heartily concur to promote so useful a design: They will be convinced, that among a numerous youth there are, comparatively speaking, but few who in science and taste can hope to succeed as they have happily done, unless an early and proper method be taken to facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, and to teach them the elements of these parts which are of universal use.

For that reason, such an academy as we have given a sketch of is so useful and necessary, that there ought to be one of them in every populous city within Great Britain: And certainly people will some time or other open their eyes, and not suffer themselves to be deluded by mere sounds, nor imagine that because a thing is called an university or seat of learning, that therefore it will convey every sort of useful knowledge; when they see, or may see so plainly, that the knowledge taught is unsuitable to such people as we are; and, were it suitable, no suitable time and pains are employed to teach it.

And we say one thing further in behalf of our city,

which to you may appear incredible, and yet nothing is more true. It is the nearness of the university to us, that is the cause of our little knowledge, and that an academy like that now projected did not long ago take place. We expected from time to time that the professors would turn from intricate and useless to useful and plain parts of science, and teach them with care and diligence. Had it not been for this vain imagination, we are verily persuaded Glasgow would have set an example to Perth, instead of Perth's having set one to Glasgow.

We have at present the best hopes, and imagine that we are within reach of having the reproach of our want of taste, and that we are careless about the education of our children, entirely wiped away. We think ourselves as sure as we can be of any thing that is future, that, if this proposal is properly executed, within eight or ten years every stranger and every discerning person will observe a sensible and general improvement in taste and knowledge among the inhabitants of this city, and that from thenceforth there will not be the least ground for any such surprise as you expressed.

But if after all nothing is done, we shall suffer you and every one to rally our citizens as you please; and as your raillery, though poignant, is genteel, so far from avoiding your company, we will court it; and judging ourselves unconcerned, we will with patience, perhaps with pleasure, hear your burlesque without opening our mouths.

Indeed, if our city shall relapse into a lethargy, as before; if there be not sense enough to see the utility, or if there be not authority, or spirit, or numbers enough to forward the execution of a project so necessary and easy, we must acknowledge, that, notwithstanding all our partiality to ourselves and our citizens, we should not know what to say further in our defence. We should, we fear, be forced to con-

fess that we betrayed some symptoms of that dulness, and that carelessness about our children, for which we have been so often blamed; or that we mistook our childrens interest, and esteemed a small saving of money to be of more importance to them than the ample fortunes they might be fitted to acquire, and all the great and shining improvements in taste and science, which by a proper course of school education they might easily make.

But if unhappily our city shall not be roused to action by the example of Perth, if our principal people, being too busy and careful about other things, shall neglect or postpone a thing so needful, we make not the least doubt but that other populous towns in the kingdom, where such an academy may be as necessary as it is here, will act a more generous and spirited part, and will wisely sacrifice a small expence to form the minds of their children, to accomplish them for business, and to make a gentleman-like figure in conversation.

Meantime useful arts and valuable knowledge will flourish at Perth. In a commercial sense, at least, Perth will be the modern Athens of this country; numbers of young men, properly educated there, will spring abroad, and make a figure in the several trading towns of the nation, and particularly in this great city. Strangers will, by the superiority of their parts, acquire great fortunes; they will lead and conduct the affairs of this city, and be respected by the nobility and gentry, while our sons, free born citizens, through want of education, will be humble and tame under the sway of greater merit, and make no becoming figure.

These are events easily foreseen. The example of Perth is not that which should chiefly influence us; it is the necessity, the visible necessity of the education proposed. Let the Perth scheme be ill contrived, let it be worse executed; suppose there be some,

who, from sordid love of lucre, are squinting at it with an evil eye, and wishing to blast it with their noxious breath; suppose they and their emissaries be striving to get hold of this hopeful infant, to crush it, or to stifle it in its cradle; nay, suppose, contrary to all probability, that its frightened and self-interested enemies should be able with their poisoned arrows to reach its vitals, and to lay its head in the dust; it is certainly possible to contrive the plan of a manly and genteel education for men of business, and to secure the execution of it, in this place. There are here a great number who have been long and deeply practised in commerce, who have great natural and acquired abilities, and are possessed of those attainments which are useful and which are ornamental. These gentlemen are well qualified to direct the education of young people who are designed for busy and active life. And we must agree, that, till this be done, our city will not make that figure in Great Britain which it is capable of making, nor appear with a lustre in proportion to its trade, its wealth, and its greatness.

On the disagreeable supposition that no academy is set on foot here, and to prevent, were it in their power, the disagreeable and well foreseen effects of that neglect, there are not wanting a number of judicious citizens who seem determined to send their sons to be educated at Perth, if they shall be informed that the plan agreed upon there is but as well executed as it is contrived. We hope and assure ourselves that they will not be under the necessity of sending them out of our own city for that purpose. At any rate, you know our mind by this letter. We hope to be exempted from your satire; or, if you sometimes play it off in our company, we will consider it as not intended personally against ourselves; unwilling however to join you in it, even though we see it just, we will beg leave to be silent.

You see, Sir, that we pay all possible deference to

the university. It has been long, and continues to be a loud complaint in several kingdoms of Europe, that the science retailed at universities is unprofitable and dangerous. Wise men have judged, that if such science has taken any hold of young people, the wisest thing they can do is to unlearn and forget it as soon as possible. Personages of the highest rank and merit have seen cause to be thankful or well satisfied, either that they never were at an university, or that by some favourable accidents they were soon removed from it. And we know sensible men among ourselves, who judge, that it would be much better for the interest of learning, that every part of science were left to be taught by private academies and private teachers; that there ought to be a total subversion of the universities of this nation; and that the price of the buildings, together with the revenues and salaries, ought to be applied to augment the livings of the clergy, or to pay the national debt. On the other hand, we think they should rather be allowed to continue as they are. They are monuments of antiquity. We consider what good they may have done of old, when the course taught by them was suitable to those remote times. There are valuable public libraries in them which it were pity not to take care of. Our city may have influence to procure places in them for the superannuated teachers of the academy, who by their assiduous and useful labour will highly merit such salaries and such ease in their old age. They are useful in some respects, and they may change their way of teaching, and become so in more. We find our hearts warm towards our own university, and towards the masters that taught us; with all their defects we loved them, and we reverence their memory. We remember, with a mixture of regret and pleasure, the idle and happy days we spent about the college; how we went sauntering up and down at our ease, with our gowns, the badges

of scholars, about us ; though it appears to you, and if we would we cannot get it denied, that we received but a poor pittance of instruction.

We wish the college to subsist and thrive, *esto perpetua*. The crown or the faculty may now and then pitch upon an able teacher educated at our academy or elsewhere, whom we would wish our posterity might have the opportunity of being instructed by, just as we at present have the opportunity of the ethic class, to which many of our citizens will send their sons after their course in our academy is finished. When they have first learned useful and necessary things, those of them who are in easy circumstances, and have genius, will be entertained with the ingenious and amusing theory of so eminent a master.

If there is any expression in this letter which may seem to convey a too diminutive idea of universities, we beg you will look upon it as a push made in necessary self-defence, and ascribe it to our eagerness to screen ourselves and our fellow-citizens from the point of your raillery, and that of others, which has been often and keenly levelled against us. With great respect we are,

Sir,

Your most humble servants.

Glasgow, }
Oct. 1761. }

LETTER

CONTAINING

REMARKS UPON A PAMPHLET

Concerning the Necessity of erecting an Academy at Glasgow.

Gentlemen,

YOUR pamphlet concerning education hath, as you must have heard, made some noise in the city. Many have approved of it; some have censured parts of it; and there are others who have railed at you, and condemned it by the lump. However, I think you need not be much discouraged, that public orations are begun to be delivered against you, set off with abundance of high-sounding and frightful epithets; epithets, however well chosen and mannerly they might appear, with whatever attention they were listened to by the grave, learned, and admiring audience, are not decisive arguments. If you have heard of them, I think you may well slight them; if you have not, I would not advise you to be at any trouble to inquire about them: Eruptions of zeal and rage may be very harmless; and at any rate it is best to let them alone, and suffer them to subside of themselves.

I got the pamphlet so soon as it reached Glasgow: I have perused it I believe with more than ordinary attention, and I am tempted to do a thing which is not a little out of my way: As an impartial bystander, I am going to make a few remarks upon your letter, but with a freedom similar to that which you have assumed. You cannot be offended reasonably, if yourselves are treated in the like manner as you have ventured to treat others. I set down things as

they occur to me, without following your order, or even attempting to observe any sort of method.

But first I will frankly acknowledge that there is nothing extravagant in the plan which you propose; it might very easily be executed, and would be of unspeakable advantage. This is not the first time I have thought of the matter: I firmly believe that if some such course of education had been delivered for these fifty or sixty years past, our country at this day would have been in a state of improvement which it cannot arrive at for many years to come.

But the proposed academy would be far more complete, if some of the genteel exercises, such as horsemanship, were taught at it. This, as I have heard, is already done at Perth, and surely it is as necessary, and may be done as easily, at Glasgow. Though the art of sitting firmly and gracefully on horseback has been much neglected, it is a valuable and manly piece of education. The things you mention are very suitable to us; but if they are now to be taught, provision should be made for teaching this also.

I must also grant to you, that the things taught, and the manner of teaching them practised at present in universities, are liable to much censure. The case is sufficiently understood, even by those who are unwilling to confess the truth of it. Without all question, education might easily be put upon a much more advantageous footing. I have heard so many good judges, and indeed every one that I converse with, of this opinion, that I suppose there are but very few who will offer to dispute the point with you. By all that I can learn, it is almost the universal opinion in this place, that if we would expect any general benefit from a course of school education, either the plan that is pursued in the university must be greatly altered, or some other proper method of education must be fallen upon.

Remark 1. But whether your letter is wrote in the

properest strain to obtain either the one or the other of these ends, is with me and several others a very great question. You have, it is apprehended, indulged yourselves in too much acrimony of expression, which, the more foundation there is for it, the persons concerned will the less excuse. The sense which themselves have of the inutility of what they teach, will appear in proportion to the strength of their resentment; but this brings about no change. With too little reserve you have told them their faults; and, as is usual, they will be the more tenacious of them: They will be at the more pains to defend or palliate what is manifestly wrong, and perhaps will affect to set the highest value upon the very things you chiefly blame: They will avail themselves of the keenness of your style, complain of rude usage, maintain that all you say proceeds from mere spleen, and continue to teach just as they did before.

When in any writing the faults of men are openly censured, the persons aimed at will cry out against the performance as scurrilous, be it expressed in ever so modest terms. But, to be plain with you, there are some passages in your letter, which I am sure will appear to be satirical. That way of writing has, no doubt, been esteemed useful to laugh or shame men out of their follies; but, to gain so good an end, it had need to be managed by a very delicate hand. To reproach a man too roughly, even for his real faults, is to make a satire against one's self.

You had been stung with indignation to see yourselves laughed at, on account of your ignorance, and you presently begin to think of an apology; but, in my opinion, before you had sat down to write your letter, you ought first to have been in a meek and calm temper, and to have used none but soft and soothing expressions; and it is well if with all this art you could have succeeded. It is no easy matter to prevail with a society to rectify measures, or to de-

part from what promotes their interest or contributes to their ease. "To abandon usurped power," says a celebrated historian, speaking of a certain convocation, "to renounce lucrative error, is a sacrifice which the virtue of individuals has, on some occasions, offered to truth; but from any society of men no such effort can be expected. The corruptions of a society, recommended by common utility, and justified by universal practice, are viewed by its members without shame or horror, and reformation never proceeds from themselves, but is always forced upon them by some foreign hand." It was to be feared, that, at any rate, the behaviour of the learned society might have been suitable to this unfeeling and inflexible spirit: But much more is this to be feared now, after you have irritated them by, I will say, your indelicate, and, in some instances at least, unnecessary satire.

Thus have you tempted the university to make no alterations in their teaching; nor have you taken the most likely way to get the academy erected. It is much questioned whether it was prudent in you to take such particular notice of two eminent gentlemen in this city. You judged that this would at least no way mar the end you propose; but were you right in that judgment? or were you under a mistake? Have we not many other able men? Why celebrate two of your fellow-citizens only, and overlook all the rest? Will not these last, will not every one of them who is of a narrow turn of mind be provoked? Though they may be convinced of the utility of the scheme proposed, will they not throw all the obstructions they can in the way, that the proposal may not succeed? Have you not unwarily given them some cause to do so? Is it to be expected that every one will advance a public-spirited measure, when he himself has been unhandsomely treated? And is it not a great pity that an useful design should be marred or retarded by the uncandidness of those who were for-

ward enough to undertake, and seemed to be in earnest to promote it?

Besides, it is doubted whether you were the proper persons to propose a reform in the matter of education. If the proposal had come from some of our most wealthy and experienced citizens, even though it had been wrote with no more spirit, it would have had a far better chance to be put in execution. Many a good motion has been rejected, because of the low condition or character of him who made it. Some great and happy changes may have been begun and effected by weak instruments; but our people of note will hardly espouse or forward a scheme proposed by those who are supposed to be far inferior to our middle-rate citizens. It is delicate to speak out on this point; you will understand my meaning.

Remark 2. In your description of a teacher of the classics, you seem to insinuate that there either has been formerly, or exists at present, some professor who reads and explains every part of Horace, without missing a line; at least, unless I and many others are mistaken, this must be your meaning. Now, this I look upon as a groundless and malicious calumny. I flatly contradict it: I affirm that it is impossible there ever was or can be any such teacher. There was none so indiscreet in my time; and if any such extraordinary person had started up since, I think I must have heard of him. Who can believe that any person should have so small a share of delicacy or common sense as to explain the Epodes, and several passages of the Satires of Horace, before a numerous meeting of young men? And if one did actually read such smutty passages, could he be so far master of himself as to read them without emotion? You describe a man, just like some king or emperor I have read of, who, it is said, heard of his wife's being killed, without feeling or discovering either pity, or sorrow, or anger, or joy. I must say you have been in some odd tem-

per of mind when you wrote what no man will ever believe.

Remark 3. I am of opinion, that before you had blamed the course of philosophy taught at the university, you should first have made a full enumeration of the several things delivered in that course. This at least would have been fair dealing, and hereby your readers would have been better able to judge whether your censure is well or ill founded.

The course of philosophy is finished in three sessions; one at logic, one at ethics, and one at natural philosophy.

The professor of logic begins with reading a little Greek; then teaches terms, propositions, syllogisms, and the other forms of arguing; then something about ideas, and the division of them; and next proceeds to metaphysics.

The professor of ethics gives a sketch of logic and metaphysics; then a course of pneumatology, and his system of morality, and jurisprudence.

The professor of natural philosophy explains Sir Isaac Newton's three laws of nature; then the five mechanic powers; gives an idea of hydrostatics; and demonstrates a few propositions in optics and astronomy.

By this full view of the course, it would have appeared that neither history, nor geography, nor chronology are among the things taught; and perhaps some part of your reasoning might have been superseded, or at least it would have carried in it more evidence and force.

I could have furnished you with a decisive proof that some of the things you judge to be of so much importance were not always excluded from the course of philosophy taught in this university. Looking lately among old books, I got in my hand a manuscript of the lectures delivered more than a hundred years ago, and I found in it a pretty accurate treatise of

geography, and another of chronology. Under this last head, pains had been taken to cause the students understand the epact, the golden number, the cycle of the sun, the indictions, the olympiads, the æra of Nabonassar, and the Julian period. Some of these are very simple things; but now boys, when they leave the college, do not understand them, and perhaps have never heard of them: So that long ago some of these very branches of science were in vogue, which at this day are esteemed important. For what cause they were left out, and whether the things taught instead of them are of less or more value; or whether, when almost every other art is improved, the art of teaching in universities has dwindled and decayed,—I had rather leave to be investigated and determined by you, than run the risk of passing a wrong judgment myself.

Remark 4. I find several people are of opinion, that you inveigh too severely against logic. They think that you decry the art of reasoning, and arraigning ones thoughts in a natural order. They allege, that in so short a discourse you have sometimes used weak arguments, and have betrayed ignorance of method oftener than once; and that it is no wonder you disparage what you do not understand. I believe I could point out some errors of that sort; but you have so candidly confessed your ignorance, and so feelingly deplored the causes of it, that I choose not to make any remarks on that head, which otherwise I should not have failed to do. I suppose, however, though you seem indeed to have expressed your meaning too strongly, that you did not intend to vilify the art of reasoning, but only the dry and technical logic of the schools; and I think you have not been well informed concerning a fact which might have been brought out on this part of your subject. I have observed how logic has been taught here for these thirty years; and there is one thing I wonder

much at: Most of the session is still consumed in teaching syllogisms; but the old practice of defending and impugning these has altogether gone into desuetude. This seems very strange. Why take up so long time about syllogisms, and not teach the students the practice of disputing? If this last is confessed to be useless, the first must be so too. If there was reason that the one should fall to the ground, there was the same reason that the other should have fallen along with it. This is such an inconsistency, that had you known it, or attended to it, I believe you would have been ready enough to mention it, and perhaps to expatiate upon it.

I call it an inconsistency in teaching; because it is perhaps no loss to the scholars that disputing is come to an end: It might bring them in conceit with quibbling, and teach them to be litigious, which would be neither to their honour nor their profit. A learned Jesuit, some of whose writings fell in my way a long while ago, makes himself merry with a certain nation that lies some where on the west side of England, who, he says, are all born logicians. They are continually employed about the universals, the *ens rationis*, and the metaphysical degrees: They feed on chimeras, and enter furiously into the disputes of the schools.

Gens ratione furens, et mentem pasta chimæris.

However, in his judgment, they are at least no better qualified for the arts either of peace or war than their neighbours who have no such quibbling or polemical disposition.

My opinion about the ordinary logic and metaphysics is perhaps not very much different from this gentleman's and from yours; but I like not to say so keen things against them as you have done. I choose rather to express my sentiments in the words of a noble author of exquisite taste, whose judgment is esteemed correct, and was once highly revered in this

university. "Had," says he, "the craftiest of men, for many ages together, been employed in finding out a method to confound reason and degrade the understanding of mankind, they could not perhaps have succeeded better than by the establishing of such a mock science."

Remark 5. It appears to me, that there is much truth in what you have said about morality. The easiest and most useful things ought certainly to be first taught: And if the nature, limits, and extent of the particular virtues were once tolerably understood, the different schemes of moral philosophy might be well enough explained to the students in a week or two; which is full as much time as they deserve, or as in prudence ought to be bestowed on them. I have heard of teachers who reasoned so long about the origin of moral virtue, that they seemed to have brought themselves and their scholars to a belief that there was no obligation at all upon them to practise morality.

To dispute about these different systems has been long fashionable, and yet nothing seems to be more misjudged. Is it the aim of morality to improve the heart and direct the practice? or is it to exercise the understanding and strengthen the faculty of reasoning? This last end might be better promoted by mathematics than by metaphysics: And if there are some of those schemes which are curious, their value decreases, and they ought to be the less dwelt upon in proportion as they are difficult to be understood.

A pedantic rhetorician in ancient times afforded much diversion. He invented, or professed the art of obscurity. "Darken your sentiments," would he say to his scholars, "express yourselves by enigmas, that people may not understand you." And when he had put together, or made up a string of jingling sounds without meaning, "That (he said), that period is excellent! I understand it not myself!"

A diversion somewhat similar to this has been given by many teachers, since the revival of learning in Europe. One either invented or patched up a system, and gravely employed himself in teaching and repeating it over every year, as if there had not been many other things that were more generally useful, and many books that had as much merit as what he had invented or set together. Discerning people saw, that at any rate he was paying a very great compliment to himself; and yet, for several ages, there has been a succession of teachers who all followed much the same track, each of them in his own particular way. There seems to have been some fascination in this matter: For if, after some years experience, any one of them found, that there was not above one in ten who understood what he esteemed so much, he must have been desperately, and over head and ears bewitched with his notions, if he still continued to insist principally upon them. Could any thing have brought him to think justly of his favourite system, it would have been his own observation, that it was, and must have been unintelligible; since, in many repeated trials, he himself was incapable to throw light upon it, or to make his scholars comprehend it.

I have sometimes thought, that the things taught in our universities ought to be ascertained and fixed by law, and altered according to the necessity of the times. A number of wise and good men might pitch upon those parts of science which are most likely to render the youth useful, and to warm their hearts with the love of virtue; and each professor might have his particular part assigned him which he was invariably to keep by. Something like this seems to have been done at the founding of universities: It is done in England with respect to the grammar there taught, and seems, at least, full as necessary with respect to philosophy: For, as I said before, it is, and was ever thought odd enough to see a professor la-

bouring at a minute, partial, or Utopian system, as if it had been the only thing worthy to be known; and that whenever he was succeeded by another, his idol of a system was no longer heard of. While he lived, it was a local morality, and circumscribed within very narrow bounds: And it was a temporary one too; for when he died, it died with him, and had not strength to survive him.

Besides, the frequent changing from system to system is really dangerous. One is certain that morality arises from one thing; another keenly affirms that it springs from a different source; a third pretends to prove that it comes from neither of the former; and half-thinking people are tempted to suspect that there is no firm foundation of morality at all.

Remark 6. But in all your letter, nothing, at first reading, appeared to me so great a paradox as that which you allege concerning students of divinity, namely, that there is no discernable difference whether they have been the scholars of a weak or learned professor. I was shocked at this. I paused, and considered it again and again. I had the patience to examine into facts, and began to see, what I wondered I did not see at first, that you did not advance this without very good foundation. But you will forgive me to say, that that part of your letter is superficial. The thought is only started: It deserved to have been kept in view, and pursued a little.

I was myself a sort of student for a very long time before I applied to business; and, for at least thirty years past, I have observed the accomplishments of most of the students who have been licensed in and about this city; and to speak with the utmost impartiality, after having considered the matter with serious attention, I cannot say that the preachers in general were remarkably either better or worse whoever was the professor. Nay, when I compare the

times with the most accurate care, I am forced to think, that between twenty and thirty years ago, there was a greater number of sensible and good pulpit-men licensed than have ever appeared within so short a compass of years since that time. I imagined, however, that it was possible I might be mistaken in this opinion, till I purposely conversed with several grave and intelligent men, who confirmed me strongly in it.

I have kept up an acquaintance with the clergy in several presbyteries round this city; and I have heard them often, and almost unanimously, complaining, that, for the most part, those who have been settled among them, within these twelve or sixteen years, do not in ability equal those who went before them. Perhaps some small allowance might be made for that propensity which most men have to commend the dead more than the living: But there is also a strong and general bias in favour of young beginners. However, all that I conclude from so unanimous a complaint is, that the preachers who have been lately licensed, or have lately entered into the ministry, are not, generally speaking, possessed of greater ability than those who were licensed many years ago.

And yet it is not likely, that all the professors for thirty years past were alike able to teach. The very reverend and worthy gentleman who has taught divinity here for near twenty years, has, without dispute, very considerable talents, and much acquired knowledge; and he applied assiduously to the business. I remember, that when he was called to the chair, there was an almost universal expectation, that the preachers educated by him would both have a larger way of thinking, and would acquit themselves in the pulpit to far better purpose than ever had been the case with the students under any professor before him.

But in divinity the same time is employed, and the

same, or nearly the same things, are read by every teacher. The doctrines, the precepts, and motives, are the same : In short, the same system is taught by whosoever is the professor. The effect therefore must be the same, though the respective abilities of the professors may be very different. If a dwarf raises up a stone four feet high, and a giant raises a stone of the same weight and size also four feet, when they are both let fall on a pavement, the impression made by the dwarf's stone will be equal to that made by the giant's. If Theseus throws a dart with all his force, which is as 20 ; and Ajax, whose force is as 100, throws a dart of equal weight and sharpness with a force only as 20, each of them will alike pierce the shield of Hector. It is very much the same with respect to any two teachers. However far one of them may excel the other in ability, the same, or nearly the same force is exerted and applied by each of them : Nay, in some respects, the weak professor may seem rather to have the advantage : Sensible of his inability, he will, it is probable, be more in earnest ; his way of thinking and speaking is more familiar ; his capacity is more commensurate to that of his scholars. In common life, a weak man enlightens and leads a weak man more effectually than a man of ability can do. If he teaches in Latin, or even in English, and blunders in grammar now and then, the students will be diverted ; they will be roused to attention, and will long remember the doctrines or things which the professor had not ready language to express. By this means they will imbibe knowledge perhaps faster than by a grave, uniform, and sensible discourse, which oftentimes tires the hearers ; and having no breaks in it, does not renew nor keep up their attention.

But we judge of teachers, not by the depth of their knowledge, but by the easiness of their compositions, and by their expressing themselves in a natu-

ral manner. Now, the students; for many years, have been taught the art of composition: They have got a course of lectures judiciously collected from the best masters in rhetoric, ancient and modern, and very diligently delivered. It might be thought reasonable to conclude, that in this respect the students must be considerably and greatly improved; and yet I have not, nor do I know any body who has observed that these lectures have produced any sensible effect. The present preachers, generally speaking, compose just as the preachers formerly did, who, perhaps, during the time of their studying, - never heard of composition.

The real cause of this I take to be, that the students are not called to compose any oftener than formerly. To give a discourse once a-year, perhaps seldom, is all that is required of them. If they were obliged to compose every week, or every month, they would soon out-strip those who studied long ago. To compose frequently by the help of so good directions would produce a very speedy and remarkable effect. But without the exercise of composition, the directions are in a manner lost. It would be just so in any other art. Should a writing-master entertain his scholars with the most excellent rules about writing, but never put a pen in their hand, he would lose his labour: Or, should a carpenter harangue his apprentices how to hew the wood, how to form every plank, and how to join the whole, but never cause them manage the hatchet, or drive a nail, he would never teach them the art of ship-building. It is the same thing with respect to composition: The rules are profitable if they are frequently put in practice; and without this all the rules in the world will never enable a man to compose. The exercise of composing is far more effectual than the rules. This is manifest from what has happened in this university; the composing one discourse a-year did formerly bring the

students to know a little about composition; the composing one discourse a-year produces the same effect still; and little alteration is made, though lectures on composition are now delivered.

But if, instead of one discourse, there were ten or twelve discourses composed yearly by each student, the advantage of the lectures would soon appear. Though these discourses were not all delivered from the desk, but only looked over, and the errors in composition pointed out by the master, a wonderful proficiency would be made; and your position, that the scholars of an able and of a weak professor are just equal, would no longer be well founded.

In the mean time, I allow the position. I suppose I have touched at the causes of it, which you did not. The remedy, I think, is obvious, if teachers will please to be at a little more pains; without which things will go on as before; and the rising generation will have no cause to value themselves in point of composition above their predecessors, notwithstanding the best lectures they may hear.

But I would fain hope, that along with so good lectures more frequent composition will also soon be brought in fashion. When the precepts are so well delivered, what pity is it that the practice should be so much neglected! The utility of conjoining them will some time appear. Indeed it is manifest, that the justest precepts, unless they are applied to practice, are very useless things, and very soon forgot. But if one labours to make himself master of the art concerning which he has heard the precepts, he both learns the art and remembers the precepts: By attempting to apply them, he fixes them in his memory; by remembering and using them, he becomes more and more perfect in the art. In short, to excel in composition, constant and almost daily practice is necessary: The rules did not teach composition; composition produced the rules.

Remark 7. You seem to suppose, that the desire of knowledge is by far more strong and general in this city than I take it really to be. That there are some men of taste cannot be denied; but the general desire here, at present, is to have a little more money; and, considering the populoufness of the place, there are, alas! extremely few who trouble themselves about any part of science whatever. They may talk plausibly about your scheme, and even in their judgments approve it; but it will be great odds if ever they open their purses to set it a-going. Could you have proposed any scheme which they saw was to double their gain next month, or next year, they would very greedily have snapped at the bait. Nay, sometimes they will be busy about the most frivolous things, while the most momentous are neglected: At the election of a parliament-man, which concerns us exceeding little, you see here a mighty and almost universal stir; but when a proper plan of education is proposed, which is of the utmost importance to the interest and honour of this city; there will be some from whom perhaps you expected much, who will be thoroughly drowsy and inactive. I think, therefore, that your hopes of success are rather too sanguine; for though I am not at present in the council, I imagine I know their temper: And I have but little hope, that the magistrates and they will, like the town-council of Perth, expend any money in that way. Between you and me, they will rather throw it away on parliamenteering; or on romantic projects, such as locks on the river, which can never be executed; and if they could, instead of being beneficial, would be highly detrimental.

Not that I despair of an academy altogether. Considering the enterprising spirit of this city, it may, perhaps, be erected in a little time. Several of my next neighbours, some of them of considerable rank and influence, see the necessity of it, and talk about

it in a generous and public-spirited manner. The greatest difficulty, they think, is to find proper teachers: And, no doubt, if the thing is done at all, it should be done to purpose, and not in a sham manner. It would be ridiculous to employ those to teach history, geography, and philosophy, who are reputed to have no tolerable knowledge of these things: It would be still more ridiculous to call a school taught by such people an academy. But I am persuaded it is not so difficult to find two or three young men of sprightly genius possessed of the rudiments of knowledge, and who are either already, or can soon make themselves accomplished for the undertaking. There are such students, though they be but little known: And certainly no other but the magistrates and principal inhabitants ought to take, or pretend to take the lead in this matter. They are best able to judge of the merit of those who may offer their service. Though no salary was to be given, the magistrates ought to take care what is the capacity of those who are entrusted with the education of youth, especially in the important things proposed to be taught at the academy. No man should be allowed to teach such things till he first undergoes a public examination in presence of the magistrates, and be approved of by competent judges.

If there shall be, in this place, a brisk and general desire for such a course of education, and if proper encouragement be offered, fit teachers of every particular branch will soon appear; and if to pronounce justly, to judge of fine writing, and to compose in English, shall, as you propose, be among the things taught at the academy, I do affirm, that any teacher of tolerable genius may borrow great assistance from a valuable book just published, the last work of a very masterly writer, I mean, *The Elements of Criticism*, the first essay of the kind I have seen in English; and

perhaps it may be a long time before any other shall venture to write upon the same subject.

Remark 8. You seem to have had two designs in view; one to defend yourselves and us from the imputation of ignorance, and the other to have an academy erected. The first, as I remarked before, you sometimes pursue with rather too much wit and satire. I doubt not but the provocation you have got may be very great: I have seen and felt very severe mocking of that sort myself; but I must repeat it again, that no provocation should have caused you write any thing which might mar your principal design, or make things worse. Universities, ill regulated as they are, are the best things we yet have for attaining some little knowledge. The masters indeed impart too little, and few of them give directions how to read. But when young people are sent to a college, and have no other business, some of them will give application to study; and though many of the things they hear in school may be thorny and unprofitable, yet, by conversing with one another, they fall into something that is of use to them. Some shreds of knowledge from the literary and busy world reach even to them, which are perhaps of more use than the lectures they hear; and, notwithstanding all you say, even these lectures are of some advantage. I think, therefore, you ought not to have lessened that esteem and reverence which scholars should have for their teachers, nor to have talked so slightly of that solemnity which you acknowledge is useful and necessary to convey instruction. It was also wrong, I fear, to use so many sharp expressions; these may provoke the professors to become more slothful, and to turn to things still more dark and unprofitable than those they now teach; and this may very likely be the case, if they see that no academy is like to be erected here. And yet, if the professors be not too obstinate, a very different effect may be produced.

Oftentimes faults are as soon corrected as they are taken notice of. Since your letter began to be talked of, I have heard that the professors are giving out that there was long ago a design to teach geography instead of logic; so that they themselves have been beforehand with you, though you perhaps may be vain enough to assume the merit of that design, as till now we heard nothing of it.

But after all, when I say that your satire may obstruct your design, I am not quite sure that I am in the right. Perhaps it was necessary; perhaps you have been sparing enough in it. That a true religion may be embraced, the false one is to be exploded; that a new and proper plan of education may be encouraged, the faults of the old and unsuitable one must be laid open. But it required an uncommon degree of boldness to speak out as you have done. I have often seen, that when all the world were convinced that wrong measures were publicly pursued, and when every wise man was wishing that others might openly censure such measures, yet he was shy and silent himself. How far you have merited blame, rather than praise, I am loath to say. One thing seems plain, that if you had been very satirically disposed, you might have thrown into your paper several late transactions, which would have appeared more severe than any thing you have said; and, as you are of this city, the things I mean could not but be known to you.

These are my poor remarks. I have offered them with a freedom which I hope is not offensive. The sense and spirit of your paper will be generally approved; the strokes of satire will be less relished. The design is noble; seasonable, and necessary; the success of it, I fear, is at best doubtful: However, by the very proposal, some good, I hope, may be produced. If the gentlemen of the university are in good humour, they will voluntarily make great alterations in the

matter and manner of their teaching. If they believe that an academy is to be erected, they will be forced to alter many things; if there is great probability that your plan shall soon take place, that will overcome their greatest obstinacy; if a royal visitation can be obtained, that will set all on a right footing. Sensible men will form an useful plan of teaching, and the professors will be tied down to observe it. If the crown appoint factors to uplift and manage the college revenues, all occasion of wrangling will be removed; the masters will live in harmony, and will have leisure to mind their proper business: They will be freed from much obloquy; and those parts of the country from which they have hitherto raised their revenues will be rescued from much real or imagined oppression. What I wish for most of all in this matter, for the sake of the public and my own children, is to see an academy presently erected; my next wish is, that the university would wisely, of their own accord, make the necessary and desired alterations in their teaching. If neither of these is done, I wish to see a royal visitation as soon as possible. It is about forty years since there was one, and it could not be more needed at that time than it is now. If it is asked in a decent and respectful manner, without showing any ill humour, or throwing out any personal reflections, a thing so beneficial to the country, and that puts the government to no expence, would certainly be granted.

Shall the university, content with the old manner of teaching, apply to parliament to have bursaries altered from the original destination of the founder, so as to suit their present interest or particular views, and meet with success? Shall this city petition to be indemnified for its losses, and to have its revenues increased and extended, and succeed also? And are there none who will apply to the king and privy-council for that which would advance the interest,

the virtue, and happiness of their children and posterity? If such application is made, is it possible but that it must be listened to? It is worthy of this city, and of the whole gentlemen in the neighbouring counties, to unite as one man, and respectfully, but firmly, to insist for so necessary and cheap a favour. It is not a narrow, factious, or self-interested affair, but of public, of extensive, and of lasting importance to the welfare and aggrandisement of our country. Is there so low an esteem, so languid a desire of knowledge, so feeble a concern for posterity, in city and country, that men will not trouble themselves to ask a thing of the highest importance, when success is almost infallible? A thing, the consequences of which are great and good, and which brings harm to no society or particular person. Were there an academy erected, men might continue in their sleep and indolence, and suffer things to proceed in the old insipid way. But with what reluctance do I think that both may possibly be neglected! If young people had been properly educated for sixty years past, it is not mine, but the general opinion, that our country at this time would have been highly improved. How painful to think that the same slothfulness may continue still! Twenty years ago, when I was riding across the country, several farmers complained to me, that if their grandfathers had planted trees on the barren ground forty years before, it would by their time have yielded great profit; and last year I was sorry to observe that they had left room for their grandchildren to lodge the same complaint against themselves. Will we be equally and infinitely more foolish? Convinced that education has been long and is at present on a wrong footing, will we make no attempt to set it on a right one? For my part, I cannot but wish that there may be spirit and resolution among us, to offer serious and repeated, but modest and inoffensive addresses on this head; and that either you or others

may awake and keep up the public attention to this great and momentous concern, till something shall be effectually done. I hope the letter I have remarked upon, which, in several respects, I think very faulty, will not however be the single essay of the kind by your society, making only a transient noise for a few days, and suffered to sink again into oblivion. I hope there are a set of men in the country, whose business it is to examine schools, and supervise the education of youth, who will imitate the spirit of their forefathers, and who, if this matter shall by all others be neglected, will have the virtue to make a proper application, and the honour of obtaining their request. Though they were lately unsuccessful in an application for themselves, where more money was sought, they will, in this generous and necessary measure, meet with full success, when no money is asked for or desired.

I have no doubt heard conjectures about the particular writer or writers of your letter; but as you have chosen to conceal your names, I follow your example: And in order to convey to you my remarks, such as they are, I have privately sent them to one who I believe knows by what channel to communicate them to you. You will please forgive this trouble, and believe me to be,

Gentlemen,

Yours, &c.

Glasgow, March 10. 1762.

B———.

L E T T E R

FROM A

*Society in Glasgow, who are not yet tainted with a taste for
Literature, to their Brethren in Paisley,*

SHOWING THE

SCHEME FOR ERECTING AN ACADEMY

IN ITS OWN PROPER COLOURS.

Brethren,

YOU have no doubt seen the late pamphlet, intituled, *The Defects of an University Education*. It contains a proposal for introducing a new plan of education, by means of an academy to be erected in this city. As the education of youth is a matter of the utmost importance, we always pay the greatest regard to every proposal for its improvement. And as the title page of that pamphlet informed us that it was wrote by a society of our own citizens, we can assure you we were greatly prejudiced in its favour: But on reading it over, we say it with tears in our eyes, we found them to be only wolves in sheeps clothing. Under a pretence of friendship for our city, they are endeavouring to stab us in our vitals. Religion has long been on the declining hand among us, and now they would also take away our trade, the craft by which we have got our wealth. But we will not quit with it so easily; we will grasp it in our arms, we will hug it in our bosoms, and cling to it till death part us.

Trade, every body may be sensible, is not a thing that will follow people against their inclination; success in it must be the effect of assiduous application;

and such application can only proceed from a spirit for trade, and a mind deeply impressed with a serious sense of the necessity and importance of being rich. Now every plan of education, which has a tendency to crush this spirit among our youth, must in proportion contribute to the ruin and destruction of our commerce.

We were convinced at first reading that this new plan of education had such a tendency, but we did not choose at that time to speak our minds publicly about it. We were convinced, from past observation, that our fellow-citizens pay no great regard to projects that have not an immediate tendency to increase their wealth. Such projects may, perhaps, at a time when trade happens to be dull, make a little noise among them for a day or two, but they are soon forgot, and leave no serious impressions on their minds. This was the case with the proposal we are now talking of. After being the common topic of conversation for a few days, it was no more regarded; and indeed we were in hopes it had met with the fate it deserved, and was sunk in everlasting oblivion.

But whilst we were indulging ourselves in this pleasing hope, out comes a parcel of Remarks on it. These Remarks appear evidently to be written by some friend to this academy, and published with no other view than to recal the first pamphlet to the memory of the inhabitants, and to preserve it from sinking into that oblivion in which it ought for ever to have been buried. The publication of these Remarks gives us reason to suspect that this scheme for an academy may be secretly encouraged by some numerous party among ourselves. We could therefore no longer remain silent. We have resolved to apply to you, Brethren; your spirit for trade is universally known; and we make no doubt but the common danger will engage you to unite your endeavours with ours in decrying this academy.

You will probably be surpris'd, that we, your old acquaintances, are now become a Society. But when wicked academicians are uniting in societies for demolishing our trade, and undermining our religion, we think it is full time that the friends of trade and religion should associate themselves for their defence. These academical gentlemen need not think to terrify us, by calling themselves a Society; for we are convinced that the uncorrupted inhabitants of this city are still a very numerous and respectable body. We, who glory in being-of that number, have resolv'd to take joint measures in opposing this academy-scheme, and it is with pleasure we inform you that great numbers are every day applying for admittance to our Society.

The authors of this proposal for an academy seem to have minded their books more than their trade; it cannot therefore be expected that we, who have been all along men of business only, should be able to cope with these people at fine writing. All that we propose is, to set forth, in the way of sober reasoning, the dangerous consequences of this academy, should our fellow-citizens be so far left to themselves as to erect one. We think we are called to exert ourselves on this occasion; and a sense of our own weakness shall not deter us from our duty.

The authors of that pamphlet are pleas'd to say that we are ignorant. Has any body seen us throw away our money? Or have we been catch'd making bargains against our own interest? These indeed had been symptoms of ignorance. But if we have no book-knowledge, if we have no knowledge of history, if we are totally unacquainted with geography, if we have no smattering of natural philosophy, are we therefore to be branded with ignorance? This, however, is not the case with us. We are not so ignorant of the history of our own country as these people would represent us. There is no trader who has

made any figure in this city, for fifty years past, but we are thoroughly acquainted with his history. We know the arts by which he acquired his fortune and raised himself in the world. We know the prudent methods which he took to keep it together, and to hand it safely down to his posterity. This is the history in which every merchant ought to be conversant. It is not to be found in your history books; it can only be learned by the faithful narratives of our aged citizens, men who have grown old in the arts of trade; and to these we listen with the most patient attention. These histories, with the practical use of them in the course of business, are deeply rivetted in our hearts; we also teach them diligently to our children, speaking of them when we lie down and when we rise up, when we sit in the house and when we walk abroad, to the end that their wealth may be increased in the land.

Your knowing people, the gentlemen for the academy, will no doubt despise this our historical learning. But how sensible are we ourselves of its utility! How often have we handled its happy fruits! The only criterion by which true knowledge can be distinguished from the kind of it that is flimsy and superficial, is its tendency to bring money into one's pocket. And we are firmly persuaded, that if the knowledge which these academical gentlemen would introduce among us was weighed in this balance, with the knowledge which prevails in this city at present, it would be found extremely deficient.

They say too that we are dull. But did ever any of them over-reach us in the way of trade? We only wish they would try this, and they would soon feel to their experience whether we are dull or not.

They may call us dull, and say we have no penetration, but they are quite mistaken. There are no people who will sooner discern latent merit, or pay more respect to it, even when it happens to make its

appearance in disguise. An eminent physician, who is lately deceased, and another learned gentleman, were one day walking by the river side with a very worthy inhabitant of this city. On a sudden the citizen starts from them, and runs forward to meet a man who was coming toward them in a very shabby dress. "What is that tattered fellow, (says the physician) of whom our friend seems to be so fond?"—"I am no way acquainted with him," replied the other gentleman, "but he is certainly a man worth money."

We are no way concerned however at being called dull. We are convinced that this malicious insinuation proceeds entirely from envy at our wealth. Dullness is an aspersión that has been thrown on rich people in all ages. The inhabitants of ancient Carthage, and our industrious neighbours the Dutch in modern times, have met with this treatment. And people who would be rich in any age must lay their account with being called dull by those who are incapable of imitating them.

But indeed it is no way surprising that the authors of this proposal should speak so contemptibly of us, when even the learned professors of the university have not escaped their scurrilous tongues. They say they are lazy, and allow their students but a small moiety of instruction. They say too that they should change their plan of education, and set up in the academy way. And they even insinuate, that some of the learned professors are ignorant of the things they pretend to teach. But for our part, we have always lived in great friendship with the professors. We do not pretend to judge about their quota of learning; but as to their plan of education, we are quite satisfied with it. One Sunday, a good many years ago, one of us happened to attend a church, in a certain city, where the minister was remarkable for the badness of his elocution and the impenetrability of his

method. After sermon, our friend accidentally met with an old gentlewoman who was one of that minister's constant hearers. The minister happening to be mentioned in the course of conversation, he told her that he was surprised she chose to sit in that church; that for his part, he had not been able to comprehend one sentence of the discourse. "It is very true, Sir," replied the old gentlewoman, "but then we are sure we drink in no error there." Now the case is just the same with our university. If the instructions of the learned professors are of no benefit to our children, we are convinced at least they are perfectly harmless. And this is a great deal more than can be said for the knowledge which these academicians propose to communicate to our children.

As the things taught at the university far transcend any ordinary comprehension, the boys are in no danger of having their minds pre-engaged in book-knowledge. When the ordinary course at the university is finished, they can apply their whole attention to trade. But if once this academy was erected, knowledge, being delivered from its present obscurity, will become easy, and, like vice when it is finely coloured over, will appear pleasant to young minds, and so draw their attention entirely off from their business. Thus, in a few years, this academy will bring utter destruction on our trade.

These, Brethren, are no chimerical terrors, they are the dictates of sober experience. The city of Aberdeen is a melancholy proof of them. About fifteen or twenty years ago, that city had a very considerable tobacco trade, but it is now quite vanished. And we believe it will be difficult to account for its departure from any other cause than the new plan of education that was some years ago introduced into the Marischal College of that city.

The very name of an university education adds dignity to a man's character; and, by dazzling the

eyes of ignorant people, may sometimes be useful to him in the way of trade. A fellow who is both able and willing to cheat him at a bargain may be scared from attempting to do so, terrified at the danger of being found out by the man who has been at the university, and who is therefore suspected to be much wiser than other people.

We remember too, that one of our old college companions used to derive a great deal of private comfort from the very thoughts of having had an university education. Whenever he happened to be overcome at an argument, (which was generally as often as he engaged in one) he always consoled himself with the reflection, that he had once wore the gown, and had all along preserved the solemnity of a profound scholar.

An university education is not only perfectly harmless to our youth, it may even be of real use to them. It has a tendency to build them up in one of the main branches of the commercial spirit. The learned professors have always, in their own conduct, discovered a very laudable attachment to money; and we charitably hope they are at all proper pains to communicate the same good disposition to their students. The authors of the proposal for an academy tell us, that the learned professors are not in some things very exemplary to their students; but we who are parents have the satisfaction to think, that their instructions on this important subject are accompanied with a very edifying example. This is a circumstance which cannot fail to have its proper effect on the tender minds of our children; and it gives us a very delightful prospect of what may be the state of commerce in this city in the next generation, if we can keep away the academy.

The love of money is an affection of importance and utility in human life. The four hundred and fiftieth number of the Spectator is a most admirable

paper on this subject. Mr. Ephraim Weed, a considerable trader in the tobacco way, writes a letter to the Spectator, in which, from the history of his own life, he proves, in a very pleasant and convincing manner, that the love of money makes men honest, sober, and religious; and has a very happy effect in rendering them calm and resigned under some of the severest calamities and misfortunes of life. The Spectator is not a very proper book for young men setting out in the trading world; we are very far from praising it by the bulk; it is only Mr. Weed's most excellent letter that we recommend to the serious attention of every young man who is ambitious of making a figure in business. We think every merchant ought to get it fairly transcribed, and pasted up in his counting-room, just by the map of Virginia. The young gentlemen who attend the counting-room, by carefully perusing it at leisure hours, will be greatly edified in the commercial life, and will feel their good dispositions toward money wonderfully increased and confirmed.

The love of money is an affection which every young man ought carefully to cherish in his own bosom. It is an excellent antidote against some vices to which young people are but too often addicted. In proof of this, we shall quote the words of the fore-said Mr. Ephraim Weed; and we think his authority, in this matter ought to be decisive: "I do not remember," says Mr. Weed, "that since my coming into this world I was ever overtaken in drink, save nine times, one at a christening of my first child, thrice at our city feasts, and five times at driving of bargains. My reformation I can attribute to nothing so much as the love and esteem of money; for I found myself to be extravagant in my drink, and apt to turn projector, and make rash bargains. As for women, I never knew any except my wives; for my reader must know, and it is what he may confide in

as an excellent *recipe*, that the love of business and money is the greatest mortifier of inordinate desires imaginable, as employing the mind continually in the careful oversight of what one has, in the eager quest after more, in looking after the negligence and deceits of servants, in the due entering and stating of accounts, in hunting after chaps, and in the exact knowledge of the state of markets; which things whoever thoroughly attends, will find enough to employ his thoughts in every moment of the day; so that I cannot call to mind, that in all the time I was a husband, which, off and on, was about twelve years, I ever once thought of my wives but in bed."

We have observed, with great pleasure, that a desire of making money has long been on the thriving hand in this corner of our native country. The flourishing state of this excellent disposition is, no doubt, in a good measure, to be ascribed to the useful instructions and edifying example of the learned professors of this university. We suppose the authors of the proposal for an academy intended to throw a slur on the learned professors, or at least on their plan of education, when they tell us, that our country gentlemen, who have been educated at the university, are no way inferior to the inhabitants of this city in point of ignorance. But every judicious person, who considers what it is that these people mean by knowledge, will be of opinion, that the learned professors are greatly to be commended for keeping their students clear of it. If our country gentlemen have no academical knowledge, they have the true knowledge, which is much more profitable to them. Have not the most part of them doubled the rents of their estates within these last thirty years? And will any sober person say that such people are ignorant? This knowledge of theirs is not only highly beneficial to themselves, it has also a very happy influence on all around them. The lower ranks of mankind are ge-

nerally disposed to imitate the manners of their superiors; and from the exemplary conduct of our country gentlemen, we have great reason to hope, that a gripping disposition, a violent desire of making money, will speedily prevail over the whole land.

That the university has no inconsiderable influence in forming this disposition in a country-side, appears from this, that the people who live at a great distance from this city, the seat of substantial learning, are sunk in the most barbarous and deplorable ignorance with regard to the main chance. A few months ago, one of our society had occasion to travel at some distance from home. Happening to have business at a house on the road, he desired a boy to take his big coat and horse to a public house about half a mile distant; and for this piece of service he offered him a halfpenny. "O yes, Sir," says the boy, "I'll take the big coat and the horse to such a place, but I have no use for the halfpenny." Our friend was quite astonished at the ignorance of this poor boy. A boy of twelve years old not to know the worth of a halfpenny! The most diminutive boy in our streets will not perform the smallest piece of service unless its value in money be first laid in his hand. This shows us the great importance of a good education. In this city both instructions and example conspire to make our children early acquainted with the worth of money; but in that part of the country where our friend met with this ignorant boy, the people live at a great distance from the seat of learning, and have no intercourse with the trading part of mankind, so that their minds have never yet got clear of their primitive ignorance.

We rejoice however in the hope, that the light of true knowledge will soon dawn on these dark and barbarous corners of the land. School-masters who have received their education at the university, may

be considered as missionaries sent forth to propagate true knowledge among these ignorant barbarians. We are told, that one of the learned professors is so charitable as to give lectures on economy *gratis*, for the benefit of such students as intend to come out in the school-master way. We have also received very satisfying accounts concerning the success of these his lectures. Several school-masters in different parts of the country, as we are informed, have scraped together very considerable sums in a few years. Their backs and their bellies have indeed been starved, but then the main chance has been carried on. Though they chose to fast, yet they had the satisfaction to think that they might have eaten had they so pleased. Cold and hunger were no doubt grievous to the flesh in the mean time ; but now they reap the happy fruit of them in the solid peace and comfort which arises from a consciousness of their own wealth ; besides a great deal of spiritual benefit to their souls from such a course of mortification. Country school-masters, you know, have the care of educating the youth in their several parishes ; and we hope, that under the discipline of such excellent preceptors, their tender minds will gradually contract a strong attachment to money, and be early formed to the love and desire of gain.

These observations, Brethren, have not led us away from our main design. By showing us the great importance and usefulness of an university education, they point out to us the pernicious tendency of these academies, and the knowledge which is to be got at them. Whenever a merchant contracts a thirst after book-knowledge, he may bid an everlasting farewell to his trade, and give up all further hopes of increasing his wealth. Considering trade as an interruption to him in the pursuit of knowledge, he will feel a secret joy when it grows dull ; the loss of a customer, instead of being a mournful and discourag-

ing event, will be to him a source of great consolation. Now, let any sober person judge whether a man of this disposition be in a thriving way. Can he fail of being speedily reduced to the most despicable poverty?

When we reflect seriously on these things, we cannot help thinking, that the very proposal of establishing an academy amongst us may be attended with very dangerous consequences to the credit of this city. Should it once take air through the country, that such a numerous body of the inhabitants of Glasgow, as the authors of this proposal seem to be, instead of hungering and thirsting after the enlargement of their trade and the increase of their wealth, have contracted a most voracious appetite after book-knowledge, what do you think will be the effect of it? Will not every one be afraid to risk his money with such people? Will not every one who has money lying at interest in this city call it in with all imaginable dispatch? Will not a general bankruptcy of the citizens be very justly apprehended? We are credibly informed, that the several banking companies in this city, being afraid that this proposal may affect the circulation of their notes, have resolved to publish an advertisement in the newspaper, declaring, that no person concerned in any of the said banking companies is infected with this thirst after book-knowledge; that, on the contrary, they are determined to exert themselves, conjunctly and severally, to the utmost of their power, in suppressing every attempt for erecting any academy in this city; and that in examining into the circumstances of people who apply to them for cash accounts, they will inquire particularly into their dispositions with regard to the academy, that none of its well-wishers may have any share in their favours. It might be expected, that a declaration of this nature, made by such a respectable body of the inhabitants, who have such a

powerful influence over their fellow-citizens in money matters, would go a great length in re-establishing the credit of this city and quieting people's minds: But the smallest appearance of danger is always so alarming in cases where one's money is at the stake, that it is hard to say what may be the effect of suspicions kindled in people's bosoms by this unlucky proposal.

The tendency of these academies to bring us to poverty, is a circumstance which should make them be vigorously opposed by every friend to peace and good order in society. We have heard of one Mr. Hobbs, who has been greatly censured for saying that mankind are naturally in a state of war. But considering that men in their natural state being ignorant of trade, are of consequence most deplorably poor, we think it is no way surprising though they should be continually quarrelling with their neighbours, and even cutting one anothers throats. Poverty makes men fearless of danger; wealth, on the other hand, has a most admirable effect in calming quarrelsome and bloody-minded people. We remember about two years ago the public was at a great loss to account for the behaviour of a certain general officer in Germany. But the affair was quite cleared up to us, when we were informed, that some short time before the battle of Minden he had succeeded to a considerable estate by the death of an aunt. This addition of wealth had entirely taken away his former fighting disposition, and inspired him with a quiet and peaceable one.

It will no doubt be objected to this observation, that the wealthy inhabitants of this city expressed the highest joy and satisfaction at the commencement of the present war. But our joy on that occasion did not in the least proceed from any desire of fighting in *propriis personis*. This is a thing to which we have always had the greatest aversion, especially since we

grew rich. Our unanimity in opposing the scheme for establishing a militia in this country, is a sufficient proof of it. Our joy at the commencement of the war proceeded entirely from the hope that other people's quarrels might give us an opportunity of enlarging our trade, and be the occasion of increasing our wealth.

Our whole hearts and souls are set on our trade. It is the spring which moves all our passions. We hope and we fear, we joy and we grieve, we are proud or we are humble, just according to the present aspect of our trade. A country gentleman, who pretended to be very satirical on the inhabitants of this city, once told us, that he could easily discern by the looks of a merchant whether he was at that particular time fortunate or unfortunate in his business. "If one of his ships," said he, "has arrived safe without any assurance, or if he has sold a large cargo of tobacco or sugar at a good price, he passes by an old country acquaintance on the street without so much as deigning to look at him. But, on the other hand, if he has lost a ship, or if one of his principal debtors has stopped payment, he knows his country acquaintance at first sight, shakes him by the hand in a very friendly manner, inquires for the welfare of his family, and discovers several other symptoms of kindness and humanity." But let us return to the academy.

We are particularly alarmed at the danger which is threatened to our holy religion by this proposal for an academy. The nation is at present so over-run with Atheists, and Socinians, and Deists, and Arians, and Free-thinkers, and Glassites, and infidels, and various other kinds of Heretics, that we cannot be too much on our guard against people who pretend to make any addition to our knowledge. And really the noise that is made about morality in that pamphlet gives us great reason to suspect that the authors

of it have some plot on our religion. We have generally observed that the corrupters of our faith cry up morality; but the inhabitants of this city have always been distinguished by a zealous attachment to purity in doctrine. We are told that the Spaniards, out of respect to their ancestors, still retain the dress that was in fashion among them two or three hundred years ago: We pay the same pious regard to the religious opinions of our ancestors, which are the dress of the mind. We do not inquire curiously into the foundations of our faith; our whole attention is engaged in trade; and we receive our religious opinions entirely on the credit of our forefathers. They were a great deal more addicted to religious speculation than we their children are; and they certainly took care that their opinions were well founded before they established them into the national faith; and for our part, we are determined that this faith shall descend to our children in the same purity it came to us.

We are told that the dissenters in England are at present over-run with heresy. We can account for this from no other cause than the great number of academies which have been set up among them.—They call these academies seminaries of knowledge, but we are convinced they are also seminaries of heresy. We remember the saying of a worthy minister of this church, who is now in glory. Speaking one day of the degeneracy of the present times, he observed, That the knowledge which poured in on us at the union of the two kingdoms was the cause of all the heresy which has overspread this land since that period. But as we are determined to adhere to our orthodoxy, no knowledge shall ever penetrate into our minds.

When we first heard such a cry about knowledge, we were so weak indeed as to imagine that probably we might not be the worse to have a little more of it.

But a very little reflection convinced us of the contrary. Had we needed any further degrees of knowledge, the reverend ministers of this city would certainly have told us about it. They are our spiritual physicians, and they certainly know best when it is proper to give us any fresh recruits of knowledge, which is said to be the food of souls.

We have heard, indeed, that this scheme for an academy has been commended by several country ministers. But can the physician of an insignificant country village be expected to have the same knowledge in business with his wealthier brethren who practise in large and populous cities? Can a country minister, the spiritual physician perhaps of some moorland congregation, be expected to know what spiritual regimen is proper for the inhabitants of Glasgow, the mercantile part of the nation? beings, one may say, of a superior order to the creatures with whom he usually converses. Knowledge of every kind, too, has always, with great justice, been valued according to the money that is made by it. A country minister, who earns only fifty pounds a-year by his knowledge, cannot be suspected to have any considerable quantity of it. No sober person will ever compare his understanding to that of a city minister, who gains triple the sum by his knowledge. The country minister's knowledge can be neither very deep nor extensive, when it brings him in such a small portion of money.

We mention these things, Brethren, that you may contract no favourable impressions of this academy from the opinion of these country ministers. The ministers of this opulent city have never expressed any liking to it; they have never made any motion toward getting it erected; we are therefore fully satisfied that it has a very dangerous tendency.

Let us now examine the advantages of the academy as they are set forth in that pamphlet.

In the first place, we are informed that this academy will inspire us with a taste for literature.—A fine accomplishment, truly, for a man of trade! Will a taste for literature improve his judgment in checks and handkerchiefs? Will a taste for literature make him a better critic in the quality of tobacco? Will a taste for literature bring any thing into his pocket? We believe it will rather be the occasion of draining it. When once a city is so far left to itself as to contract a taste for literature, it is immediately visited with swarms of booksellers. Like the locusts mentioned in the prophecies, they will cover the face of the whole city. By booksellers, however, we do not mean the worthy gentlemen who follow that occupation in this city at present. They have a spirit for trade, and deal only in catechisms, and some few staple articles fit for exportation. By booksellers we mean your dangerous people who bring down books from England. These books draw the minds of our youth entirely off their business, and introduce heresy among them. And young people, by laying out their money on such unprofitable articles, gradually wear off from their minds that serious sense of its value and importance which is the main principle of the commercial life.

Nothing too can be more pernicious to a young man's trading principles than the maxims by which your men of taste ascertain the value of books. They do not value them by their weight, or the quantity of paper and print they contain, though these be the things that constitute their intrinsic worth. They value them, forsooth, by the fineness of their sentiments, and the elegance of their style, circumstances to which we pay no manner of regard. Some years ago, a country clergyman happened to be dining with an eminent merchant in this city: The conversation accidentally turned on a political topic that was much talked of at that time: The clergyman observed that

a sixpenny pamphlet that was lately published on that subject, was one of the most spirited and elegant papers that had appeared in this country for a long time. "Ay," says the merchant, who had not yet seen the pamphlet, "is there ought meikle reading in't for the filler?"—We in this city want always to have penny-worths for our money: We know how we came by it, and we do not choose to give it away but for its full value; and we are sure no prudent man will blame us for so doing.

The authors of this proposal would make us believe that a taste for literature will be of great benefit to our morals: But for our part, we have never observed, in the course of our experience, that your men of knowledge were any way superior to other people, in point of morals. Some philosophers, indeed, tell us, that a taste for literature refines the moral faculty, improves its sensibility, and renders it more delicate. But if this be the effect of literature, we desire no further acquaintance with it. Delicacy of morals makes people hesitate at taking a bargain, and hinders them from embracing advantages which providence throws in their way in the course of trade.

There is nothing which has been oftener complained of, or which magistrates have been at more pains to suppress, though unsuccessfully, than the pernicious practice of begging. Our begging poor are at present extremely numerous; yet if this academy should unfortunately take place, we cannot see but they must increase prodigiously. We have heard that in times of popery there were certain vagrant monks, the repositories of knowledge in those days, who traversed the country, laying the industrious part of mankind under contribution for their subsistence.—Now, when academies are once erected, and a taste for literature and book-knowledge is become common among us, we suppose the *literati* will form themselves into several mendicant societies for carrying on

the same important purposes. Indeed, we cannot imagine how they will otherwise be maintained.—Knowledge is an enemy to trade, and we suppose it is equally unfavourable to every other kind of industry. And really from the great noise which the friends of these academies make about the importance of charity, we always suspected they had some intention to set up in the begging way.

But this blessed academy will not only inspire us with a taste for literature, we are also told, in the second place, that the knowledge which is to be got at it will enable us to make a better figure in company. Some people have really a prodigious stock of impudence!—Would any body, who was not lost to all sense of shame, ever affirm such a manifest falsehood? Who, in the name of wonder, appears with greatest dignity in a company of merchants? or who is listened to with the most reverend attention? Is it not the richest men? and the man who can talk experimentally of the largest transactions? Was it ever heard that literary subjects were topics of conversation among the inhabitants of this city?—We believe no such thing could ever be laid to our charge. You see, Brethren, it is not all scripture what these academicians tell us. This is a sample of their fine morals.

But besides these great and important advantages which the inhabitants of this city will derive from the academy, we are told it will likewise be an excellent nursery for young clergymen. But we wish these gentlemen would inform us how a clergyman can be any thing the better of a great deal of knowledge. Will his being a knowing and ingenious man recommend him more effectually to any patron? We believe not. We remember very well that a certain clergyman was once recommended to a noble peer, who was long the patron of this city, as a proper person to supply the vacancy of a neighbouring borough. The clergyman's friends, to heighten his me-

rit, told the peer that he was a man of genius and ability. "I want none of your able men," replied the peer; "the last incumbent was a man of ability; and he managed the town-council in such a manner that he could easily have turned them away from my interest, had he been so inclined. I want a weak man who will be submissive to his superiors, or at least incapable of doing them any harm, should he ever take it in his head to oppose them."

But will this knowledge be of any more use to him in gaining the affections of the people? We can assure him it will not. A clergyman who was not very popular, being presented to a parish in this neighbourhood, his friends were willing, if possible, to reconcile the parishioners to him. For this purpose they told them that he was a sensible man, and had a great deal of learning. "We desire no learned man," replied the parishioners, "we are a weak people, and we need an instructor whose understanding will be some way suitable to our own."

We would therefore advise students in divinity, instead of employing their time in an idle pursuit after knowledge, to attend the university in the usual manner. Though they should get but a small allowance of knowledge, yet by carefully observing the conduct of the professors, they will learn how minds may be managed to the best advantage. By diligently reducing these lessons to practice, when they come to have parishes of their own, they will gradually grow rich; and their wealth will make them appear with dignity in the eyes of the country gentlemen; will give them an air of importance at a synod or an assembly; and will command the veneration and respect of the common people more than all the knowledge they could possibly acquire at the academy.

The authors of this scheme for an academy seem to have great dependence on the patronage of two of our most eminent citizens. We esteem these two

worthy gentlemen, and we cannot think they will ever interest themselves in this affair. We are rather of opinion, that they have been mentioned in that pamphlet only to make them suspected by the friends of trade and religion. But their enemies have here missed their aim, for we are convinced of their innocence. One of them has long been at the head of public affairs in this city, and we are persuaded he is a better politician than to introduce knowledge among the common people. If ignorance be not the mother of devotion, we are sure it is the mother of obedience. Knowledge makes men aspire to power, and enables them to oppose their governors. Historical knowledge particularly is very pernicious to government. We remember to have heard from a bookish exciseman, who once lived in our neighbourhood, that the Greek and Roman historians, and some few modern ones too, give people such notions of liberty as are quite incompatible with the dutiful submission which subjects owe to their magistrates. Now, as knowledge is so dangerous to the springs of government, we may hope that academies will always be discouraged by men in power. And unless the present scheme for erecting one in this city be countenanced by somebody in power, we will venture to foretel, without pretending to the gift of prophecy, that it will come to nought.

The authors of that pamphlet indeed seem to think that the inhabitants of this city may be driven into this scheme by dint of satire. But here they are quite out of their logic. Our present state of ignorance, as they are pleased to call it, is attended with a certain firmness of mind, that makes us superior to all attacks of this nature. Some people indeed are pleased to baptise this our firmness of mind by the name of stupidity. But if it should be stupidity, we rejoice in the possession of it. It puts us beyond the reach of the only weapon with which

poor devils, who are oppressed with poverty and genius, can attack their industrious adversaries. We have heard of some weak people, who, by the power of satire, have been driven to hang themselves. But we have no such squeamish stomachs. We desire these gentlemen to squeeze their brains till their satire be reduced to its very droppings; we will bear it with all that calm resignation with which a Spaniard, for the good of his soul, allows himself to be whipped through the streets of Madrid.

We have heard several conjectures concerning the authors of this proposal for an academy. But to us it appears exceeding plain, that it has been contrived by some emissaries of the French king, with a design to extinguish our spirit for trade. The Grand Monarque knows very well, that if our trading spirit had once left us, the great conquests we have made this war would soon return to him. And we cannot help thinking further, that the proposal for educating young clergymen at this academy plainly indicates a design of bringing in popery. What in all the world can they mean by making clergymen more knowing than other people? They certainly intend to bring the laity into a total subjection to the church, which is the very essence of popery. It is therefore our humble opinion, that the magistrates should take proper measures for discovering whether there be not some Jesuits in disguise lurking about this city or its neighbourhood, and get them brought to condign punishment. We are told in the public papers, that whole ship-loads of Jesuits have been lately imported to Britain; and we make no doubt but some of these ministers of Satan are at the bottom of this proposal for an academy. But from the vigilance and activity of our magistrates, we hope they will soon meet with their reward. The Jesuits still retain some fragments of the ancient apostolic spirit; when they are persecuted in one city, they fly to another. Some of them,

driven from Glasgow by the diligence of the magistrates, will probably harbour about the town of Paisley; but as the inhabitants of your borough have always been distinguished by a sharpness of scent after heresy, these delinquents will no doubt be immediately detected and brought to justice.

It is a most dreadful thing, Brethren, to fall into the hands of academicians. Did they only aim at the destruction of one particular branch of our commerce, we would possibly get over it; another branch might perhaps cast up of equal or even superior profit; but an academy, by corrupting the minds of our youth with book-knowledge, affects the very *flamina vitæ* of our trade.

As it is this city which is immediately threatened with the academy, some shallow people may possibly imagine that we only are concerned in defeating that project. But, Brethren, we hope better things of you. Your understandings surely are not so dull but that you will easily discern, at first view, that your own interest is very intimately connected with the ruin of this academy. The inhabitants of Glasgow are the very soul of trade in this part of the kingdom; and should their commercial spirit be extinguished, the consequences of it must soon be felt through the whole country. But, setting aside this consideration, you need not flatter yourselves that these enemies of our trade will be content with making their scheme take effect in this city. Indeed they leave no room for conjecture concerning their after intentions. Towards the end of their pamphlet, they tell us plainly, that they make no doubt but academies, will soon be erected in all the populous towns throughout the kingdom; and we suppose their impious endeavours will not be wanting in carrying on this hellish design.

We observe, with inexpressible concern, that they have already met with too much success in the north

country. The inhabitants of the royal borough of Perth, being seduced by them, have lately erected an academy. French emissaries indeed could hardly miss making impression on people who live so near the Highlands. We hope however that the ministry will have a sharp eye on these gentlemen. Academies, as we observed before, are very dangerous to the government; and suspected persons ought no more to be trusted with knowledge than with arms.

Having accomplished their design in the town of Perth, they have made their next attempt on this city. And, no doubt, the eyes of the whole nation are fixed on us, and on you, Brethren, who live just in our neighbourhood, to see whether we will tamely submit to their scheme, or show ourselves men in defence of our trade and religion. For our part, we are determined to act with spirit in this matter; and we beseech you also to exert yourselves on the occasion. Let us unite our endeavours against the common enemy; and if, by our courageous opposition, these academicians are baffled in this attempt, we may hope that the inhabitants of other towns, animated by our shining example, will be able also successfully to resist these servants of the devil. We are,

Brethren,

Your most humble servants.

*Glasgow, }
June, 1762. }*

P. S. If you think this letter may be of any service in awakening people's attention to the dangerous tendency of these academies, you are at liberty to use it at your pleasure.

THE
UNCORRUPTED INHABITANTS OF PAISLEY
TO THE
P U B L I C.

THE foregoing letter is a faithful warning against the designs of certain wicked persons who are at present endeavouring to undermine our trade. Our worthy friends having allowed us to use their letter at our pleasure, we thought we could not do the community a more seasonable piece of service than putting it into the hands of a printer. The importance of its subject must recommend it to the public attention more than any thing we can say in its favour. The attentive reader will immediately discern the great obligation he is under to these gentlemen for putting him on his guard against academies and their abettors. We believe there is no person who has been any time in trade, but can easily recollect, from his own observation, several instances of the bad effects of book-knowledge, the thing to be learned at academies. For our part, we always had a bad opinion of it. We have now and then, very seldom indeed, seen a bookish weaver start up among us; but he never made any figure in business: In a year or two, he either died of a consumption or listed to be a soldier. It is no wonder, therefore, though we be alarmed at the approach of these academies with their book-knowledge; and as we do not choose to be wanting in our duty on this occasion, we take this opportunity of declaring, in a public manner, that we are firmly resolved to second our Glasgow brethren in their spirited opposition to them.

These academies are not only dangerous to trade,

they seem also to threaten our church with an inundation of heresy. We would therefore recommend this matter to the most serious attention of the very reverend synod. We might here insist on the obligation the synod is under to pay a proper regard to our recommendation. The inhabitants of Paisley have always been distinguished by their zeal for the church. It does not indeed become people to speak of their own attainments; yet we cannot help observing, and we do it without vanity, that we have been the occasion of more business to church-courts, for these last ten years, than any two boroughs within the bounds of this synod. It well becomes the synod, therefore, to listen to what we recommend to them. We are perfectly well acquainted with the respect that is due to a good customer; but, however, we shall not insist upon it at present. The cause now before us recommends itself. It is the cause of trade and religion; and we think the synod ought to glory in being the defenders of these valuable enjoyments.

We shall not pretend to say in what manner the very reverend synod ought to proceed in this affair. There was a time when excommunication might have been very profitably applied to these academicians. But we, alas! live in a degenerate period, when the beautiful discipline of the church is quite disregarded. Though our brethren in the neighbouring church have fallen into some errors, yet they have not lost all regard to religion among them. Excommunication can still take away a man's moveables, unless he give proper signs of repentance in a few days. Such a powerful excommunication would be particularly useful among us at present. When a man loses his effects, he also loses his influence over others. An academician in low circumstances could not be very dangerous. No gentleman of rank or character would regard him. His reasonings about the advantages of an academy would meet with no credit; for his un-

derstanding would naturally be suspected to labour under the same poverty and meanness with his person.

But though church censures in this country are contemned by the laity, they are still very formidable to the clergy. And as our Glasgow brethren inform us, that several country ministers have been heard to speak favourably of these academies, we think the very reverend synod ought immediately to apply the EXCISION to these gentlemen. A worthy minister of this church, one of her burning and shining lights, has fully explained the nature and use of that spiritual instrument, in a sermon which he published about five months ago; and certainly there cannot be more proper subjects for exercising it on than these corrupt members, who have discovered such symptoms of an inclination to heresy.

Paisley, Sept. 29. 1762.

L E T T E R

CONTAINING A

DEFENCE OF THE COLLEGE OF G———W,

*Against an insidious Attempt to depreciate the ability and taste
of its Professors.*

Sir,

THE surprising success with which it has pleased God to bless his majesty's arms, and the auspicious birth of a Prince of Wales, are events so glorious as might be supposed to inspire joy into every loyal British heart, and give a flow of proper expressions even to the rude and unlearned in their addresses to the Throne.

When, therefore, I looked into the newspapers, and saw an address from the University of Glasgow, I expected something spirited, and which might come with propriety from so learned a society. But I was beyond measure astonished to find it conceived and expressed precisely in the following terms:

“ To the King's Most Excellent Majesty,
“ The humble Address of the Chancellor, Rector,
Principal, Dean of Faculty, and Professors of the
University of Glasgow.

“ *May it please your Majesty,*
“ WE, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects,
the chancellor, rector, principal, dean of faculty, and
professors of the university of Glasgow, most humbly
beg leave to congratulate your Majesty upon an event
which has given so much joy to all your faithful sub-
jects, the birth of a prince, the natural and legal heir
of your Majesty's crown and of all your dominions.

“ Your Majesty’s ever dutiful and loyal people cannot but rejoice at an event which tends to perpetuate that family, under whose mild and equitable government they have enjoyed so much prosperity and happiness. Their fond hopes and affectionate expectations already regard their infant prince as born to inherit, not only the throne, but the virtues of his father and of his ancestors; and if it shall please the all wise Disposer of kingdoms and empires to preserve his precious life, they already flatter themselves that their posterity will enjoy under his reign the same entire liberty, the same exact justice, the same undisturbed security at home, and the same dignity and consideration, the same glory and martial renown among foreign nations, which have distinguished, in the annals of Great Britain, the reign of your Majesty, and of your Majesty’s ever respected and revered forefathers.

“ We beg leave, at the same time, to take this opportunity of congratulating your Majesty upon the many glorious successes, the natural consequences of a wise and vigorous administration, which have illustrated that short period of two years, during which your Majesty has reigned over these kingdoms. The reduction of Bellisle; the more important acquisitions of Martinico, of Grenada and its dependencies, and of all the neutral islands; the capitulation of the Havannah, the chief city of the great and rich island of Cuba, and the key of Spanish America; the surrender of the ships in the harbour, the flower of the Spanish navy; the spirited attack and conquest of the Moro Castle, notwithstanding its natural strength, its numerous and well supplied garrison, and the skill, valour, and inflexible magnanimity of its gallant defender; the speedy recovery of Newfoundland; the entire expulsion of the French, notwithstanding their superiority in numbers, from Hanover, and from the greater part of the county of Hesse; and the generous support which, in the midst of a furious war

with the two most powerful nations on the continent, has been given to the king of Portugal, form a series of events which cannot be paralleled by any period of equal length in the history of Great Britain. That those triumphs of war may at last lead to that equitable, glorious and lasting peace, which your Majesty, from a truly royal humanity and moderation, desires to see established; and that your Majesty's royal comfort, our gracious Queen, and the young Prince of Wales, may long live to enjoy that security and tranquillity, which your Majesty's beneficent magnanimity seems to wish might be diffused over all nations, is the earnest prayer of your Majesty's ever loyal and dutiful subjects.

“ At the College of Glasgow, the 29. October 1762.”

This paltry, ill wrote, and unsuitable address, is so unlike the performance of learned or sensible men, that it is highly presumable it cannot be the address of the College of Glasgow. But how the genuine address was altered, or new-modelled, or mislaid, or wilfully suppressed, and how this pitiful paper has surreptitiously got into its place, is a matter of deep inquiry.

It is well known, that for a twelvemonth past many groundless complaints have been made against a very great minister, merely because he is a Scotsman; and in such factious clamours inferior people oftentimes interest themselves with too much keenness. It is also known, that after addresses have been presented to the king, they are delivered, without any further inquiry, to the publisher of the Gazette: At first therefore I imagined that this Gazetteer, keen in the interest of the old ministry, had garbled the college address, with an invidious design to exhibit the learned gentlemen in a ridiculous and contemptible light; concluding, that if he could make it be believed that the learned in this country are stupid and disaffected,

it would naturally be inferred that other Scotsmen must be possessed of the same qualities to a still greater degree. But when I reflected that the Gazetteer publishes by authority, and dares not falsify papers, though he were inclined to do it, I suspected my conjecture might be wrong. I then imagined that the express who was entrusted with the genuine address, had, in a case of necessity, made free with it by the road; and being in a woeful perplexity on this occasion, had imitated the conduct of the sagacious Irishman, who, having lost his master's letter, went about asking every one he met to lend him a letter to replace it; accordingly, having picked up an old address of some stupid borough, had, with the assistance of his landlord, over a mug of beer, altered, amended, and cobbled it, so as might make it pass for the address of an university: Or, that some malignant enemy to Scotland, hovering about the post-office, had by some artful method stolen the real address, and substituted the foregoing silly paper in place of it. But which of these is the fact cannot yet be thoroughly ascertained. It is however manifest, that a paper, which represents the learned gentlemen as disaffected, ignorant, and even incapable of spelling English, must be a forgery: And it is also manifest, that the university is dreadfully injured, and our poor country affronted and contaminated, while it is believed that this vile paper is the address that was laboured by our university. Some able hand may afterwards demonstrate this to the conviction of all the world. In the mean time, a sincere concern for the reputation of my country has prevailed with me to offer the following reasons in proof of what I allege, that so this matter may appear in its true light, and our university no longer lie under the imputation of illiterate stupidity.

The first paragraph is decent: And this appears to be a very artful contrivance of the forger, that so he might entice people to read what follows. He makes

the professors to write a line or two like loyal and sensible men; then out he comes with his malice, and vents it to purpose, and forms a series of improprieties and ridiculous blunders, 'which are not to be paralleled in any address of equal length in the history of Great Britain.'

1. This impudent forger, whoever he was, makes the professors to speak absurdly, and quite out of character: He represents them not in the capacity of addressers, but of informers, and makes them tell the king that his people are well affected: But a few persons shut up in a college, and sequestered from the world, have of all others the least access to know how the subjects are affected: And had any in this country been disaffected, would it have been their business to inform against them? Had this paper been really wrote by the professors, they would have enlarged more upon their own loyalty than upon that of others.

2. This address could not be the work of a learned society, as not a word is said in it about learning, nor so much as a wish for its improvement; and yet never was there, in any former reign, a fitter opportunity to mention the advancement of learning in an address to the Throne. His Majesty, it is well known, is a patron of learning and the elegant arts; and of this the professors themselves have been made sensible. How then could an address come from university gentlemen, wherein that which of all things was most proper to be mentioned by them is totally passed over in silence?

3. There are in this paper several remarkable instances of the art of sinking, which learned men would never have fallen into: They congratulate his Majesty upon the capitulation of the Havannah, and the surrender of the ships in the harbour; that he has driven the French out of all Hanover, and out of part of the county of Hesse. These periods are like,

Under the Tropic is our language spoke,
And part of Flanders hath receiv'd our yoke,

They first say that his Majesty desires peace, and then, "that his *beneficent magnanimity* seems to wish there might be peace." To say the king desires peace, or that he seems to wish there might be peace, are both of them expressions highly indecent: They seem to imply, that there is either want of sincerity or want of power in the best and greatest of kings. Our king, blessed be God, can give, can command peace to the nations, whenever his wisdom sees proper to do it: He can do this as effectually as the greatest or most glorious monarch in Europe could ever have done.

4. Some words in this paper are indeed very big and sonorous, and some of the epithets are applied in a manner quite new. But while his Majesty's *beneficent magnanimity* is acknowledged, the defender of Moro Castle is celebrated for his skill, valour, gallant defence, and *inflexible magnanimity*. This defender, not the defender of the faith, seems to be the hero in the address. But if this defender of Moro was so skilful, so valorous, so gallant, so magnanimous, was not the British general who defeated him still more so? If the vanquished Spaniard must have so many fine epithets lavishly bestowed upon him, was the victorious Briton to have not so much as one word said in his praise?

5. This paper could not come from the college, because the pains-taking writers of it seem to be afraid lest they should be suspected of ignorance in chronology, geography, and about the comparative value of his Majesty's acquisitions. They tell the king that he has reigned two years; that the acquisition of Martinico is more important than the reduction of Bellisle; and that the Havannah is the chief city of Cuba; that Cuba is an island; that it is a great and rich island; and that either the island or the city is the key of Spanish America. All this might have come with some propriety from a remote and diminutive borough, where the people were vain of hav-

ing read the newspapers, and eager to display their skill in politics and geography; but these are things which learned men needed not to have told the king, nor to have suspected that they should be deemed ignorant of them, except they had brought out all their knowledge.

6. The professors are made to pray, "that our gracious Queen and the young Prince of Wales may live long to enjoy that security and tranquillity which his Majesty's *beneficent magnanimity* seems to wish might be diffused over all nations;" but not so much as a wish is expressed that his Majesty may live to enjoy that tranquillity himself. Unmannerly, shameless, black, manifest proof of forgery! But I stop short, inclining to hide, if possible, an insinuation of the basest kind, which this impudent forger has couched here against the learned gentlemen.

7. Lastly, Another convincing proof that the above address is spurious, is its being so much inferior to that of the city of Glasgow. Learned men, who are perpetually conversant in books, who read Geddes on the Composition of the Ancients, hear lectures on composition in the college, and peruse excellent and incomparable systems of rhetoric, kept in manuscript for their own improvement, must be supposed to acquire a correctness of taste and style infinitely beyond what can be expected from merchants, who are almost constantly in a hurry of business, and have little time to acquaint themselves with the beauties of fine writing; on which account, nobody ought to be surprised, if, in drawing an address, the former have an evident superiority over the latter. But here just the reverse has happened; the merchants have far excelled the learned: The address published in name of the learned seminary is a childish and wretched composition; in that of the city there is a conciseness and propriety of sentiment and expression which please exceedingly: A complete demonstration, one should

think, that this college address is spurious, and that the learned gentlemen have been cruelly abused.

These are some of the particulars which induce me to believe that the above poor paper is not, nor can be, the production of the college. And if the authentic address, that which was studied, laboured, and composed by the joint efforts of so many learned men, can be discovered and soon offered to the public, it will gradually wipe off that disgrace which the gentlemen have already suffered, and do as yet lie under, by means of the above insipid and spurious paper.

Whether the learned and injured gentlemen will be so fortunate as to find out the forger, and in that case what punishment they will inflict upon him, is not so easy to determine: Whether they will choose to challenge him at pen-knife and pistol, or knock him down with a mug of porter, or make application of the birch to his posteriors, or send the printer to correct him in the manner he did a certain professor, or raise a furious war against him at law, till they force him either to produce and publish the genuine address, or make up another as good in its place, or else obtain *exact justice* and full damages against him, cannot be foreseen. Perhaps, from their *inflexible* and *beneficent magnanimity*, from their truly academical humanity and moderation, and to save their money, they may "seem to wish, that when peace is diffused over all nations," there may be also an "equitable, glorious, and lasting peace," between them and this forger. They may in the mean time, from their innate greatness of mind, pocket up the affront; satisfying themselves, that as they may probably have soon another opportunity of addressing the Throne, their periods then shall be so melodious, so magnificent, and so mellifluous, and their whole performance so noble and sublime, as will perfectly convince the public that the one lately printed in their name was none of theirs; and indeed they seem to have wisely planned

an event with that view. Then all will be right; their reputation, wounded by this base forger, will have a speedy recovery; then they will write and clerk with as much elegance as any person or society “in the four quarters of the terraqueous globe.” In “their fond wishes and affectionate expectations, they may already regard their future addressees with wonder, and may already flatter themselves that they and their posterity shall for ever enjoy the same entire liberty to write just as they please, the same undisturbed ease and tranquillity at home, the same dignity and consideration, the same scholastic glory, the same literary renown among foreign nations, which have distinguished, in the annals of the university, their own college-reign, and that of their ever respected and revered predecessors.”

I am, &c.

D———*n*, }
Nov. 25. 1762. }

DONALDSONIAD.

J——N D———N DETECTED;

OR,

An Account how the authentic Address of the C——— was discovered.

In a Letter from A. M. Student in Divinity to C. H. Esq.

Sir,

THE noise that has been made here about the falsifying of the C——e address must, I suppose, have reached you. It is really an odd incident, and hath occasioned much speculation. But as the matter is now cleared up, and the authentic address discovered, an account of this curious affair will probably be entertaining to you; and this I the more readily undertake to give you, as I have the following particulars from such authority as may be depended upon.

With regard to the address that was printed in the newspapers, every one must have perceived (though no person had taken the pains to show it in print) that it was spurious, and could not possibly be the production of a learned society. But the question was, how the C——e ought to behave in such delicate circumstances? For should they disavow the address published in the newspapers as being supposititious, whilst they could not show how it came to be so, the public would not believe them. "You have (it would be said) presented to his Majesty a very ridiculous address, and now, when all the world derides it as a stupid and pitiful composition, you disown it, and pretend it was forged and vitiated." That such like reflections would be thrown out in public

upon their disavowing the address, the society easily foresaw; and therefore, after long and mature deliberation, they at length took the resolution to acknowledge and defend it. There were some things in that spurious paper which were tolerable, others not quite absurd, and even the most gross and palpable blunders in it might admit of a plausible apology, or be varnished over with a specious colouring; for what is there so execrably stupid and absurd which the eloquence of a learned man, enforced by that veneration which is commonly paid to a learned society, cannot palliate and defend? Accordingly, this resolution being agreed to, the learned gentleman who had suggested it, agreeable to that magnanimity which characteriseth him on all occasions, made a further overture to the society. He offered to encounter personally the public ridicule, and openly pass himself for the author of the address. It is impossible to describe to you with what admiration and applause this proposal was received, and how suddenly it revived the sinking spirits and altered the dismayed looks of a dozen learned men:

—————Tow'rds him they bend

With awful reverence prone;————

Nor fail'd they to express how much they prais'd,

That for the general glory he despis'd

His own.—————

MILTON, B. II.

And in a transport of gratitude it was voted upon the spot to dubb him D—— of L——, which was executed with all convenient speed; both to reward his public spirit, and also with this political view, that, being invested with doctorial honours, he might communicate a more powerful sympathy, and might more successfully influence others to go along with him in this affair, than, had he remained undignified, he could possibly have done. But though the inflexible Doctor exerted himself with great firmness as well as address, he had the misfortune to find very few per-

sons disposed to beat time with him. There was one great difficulty which sensible men could never get over; they could never be persuaded that a philosopher, whose bowels yearn with such ardent sympathy for the great, that he maintains mankind are naturally prone to salute them with the oriental compliment, O king, live for ever! could possibly have forgot to wish long life to his Majesty, when he was putting up that same devout prayer for others of the Royal Family: And with respect to his asseverations, these also had very little weight, because it is well known, that with our more recent moralists, and even with some theologians, veracity is esteemed to be but a subaltern virtue; a law contrived to bind the vulgar, but with the observation of which great souls, and especially great politicians, may easily dispense, for the sake of a public, and even sometimes for the sake of a private advantage.

This project, therefore, not being attended with the success that was expected, the society neglected no means whereby they might discover the author of the trick that had been put upon them, but were quite at a loss where to fix their suspicions. At first they imagined that the author of a pamphlet concerning the Defects of an University Education, who had endeavoured to inspire a belief that the cultivation of taste and elegant literature was greatly neglected by the c——e, had fallen upon this artful way of giving the public a sort of demonstrative proof of what he had asserted; but as no facts cast up to support this suspicion, they were obliged to abandon it. They next suspected that the discarded porter, whom they had violently turned out of his office which he had four or five years ago purchased with a considerable sum of money, in the faith of enjoying it for life, had, in the keenness of revenge, watched about the faculty room, got hold of the real address, and either carried it off, or mangled it so as to put the highest

affront upon his late masters; but upon examination this also proved to be but a groundless conjecture. At last, after many fruitless researches, and when they had almost quite despaired of getting light from any quarter to clear up this dark affair, it transpired, I do not know how, and began to be whispered in the c——e, that, about the time when the un——ty were preparing their address, old J——n D——ld——f——n had been very busy writing something or other; that he had bought a stock of pens and half a quire of gilt paper; that he had also been observed going about among the students asking how such and such words were spelled; and it was recollected, that ever since the news of the taking of the Havannah, J——n was perpetually raving about Veylaxcow (as he called him) the magnanimous Spaniard, and could talk of nothing else. All these concurring circumstances, and others too, curious enough, made J——n to be justly considered as a suspicious person; so that it was thought fit to summon him before his superiors, and Pr——f——r——— and two more were appointed as a committee to examine him.

But before I give you an account of J——n's examination, it may not be improper to give you some strictures of his character, which is a pretty singular one.

Though J——n hath now been a member of a scholastic seminary about forty years, he is not in the least covetous of money, which you will say is most wonderful, and perhaps you do not believe me; but I shall give you a proof of what I assert: Some years ago, when the king of Prussia's affairs were thought desperate, Mr. R———t with a knot of politicians, were lamenting over him, and regretting that he must necessarily succumb for want of money, J——n, who was in waiting as usual, listened to their discourse; and as he enters warmly into all the public concerns, cried out in the ardour of public spirit, "O, gentlemen, think ye five and twenty pound wad do him ony guid:

It is a' I hae made about the college, an' I'll send it to 'im wi a' my heart." This excited a loud laugh in the company, and J—n for his simplicity was long the joke of the college. Another thing remarkable about J—n is, that he is devoutly religious, that is, he hath a real though not a general religion. For though he breathes the thin infectious air of metaphysics, and converses much with young sceptics and pert freethinkers, he does not seem to have imbibed any of the present fashionable modes of opinion: Not but that honest J—n hath his peculiar conceits in philosophy; and, indeed, considering his long residence in a college, it would be most strange were it otherwise. One favourite notion of J—n is, that there exists a direct sympathy betwixt the two ends of man, or the two poles of the microcosm, as he learnedly expresses it, or as we express it in vulgar language, betwixt a man's head and his heels: And upon this principle he maintains, that a strict analogy may be observed between every one's natural manner of walking and his manner of thinking, and that to call a man eloquent, or feery o' the feet, is to speak of him in synonymous terms: And indeed it is surprising, that in the course of his observation within his academic sphere, he hath picked up so great a number of facts, which he adduces in support of his theory with amazing acuteness and propriety: For instance, he will tell you, that to be splay-footed and to present the broad-side of the foot foremost in walking, is a never-failing sign of gross stupidity, and a blunt unpenetrating understanding; and that to walk with the toes turned inward, is a sure diagnostic of narrow intellects and a contracted way of thinking: If a learned man walk the streets with an uncommon and stately stride, J—n pronounceth him a master of the Ciceronian period, and that he either is or will be the inventor of some strange and out-of-the-way system: If he hath a shuffling, awkward, and hobbling

gaît, he calls it a symptom of a feeble unequal style : And if he trip and skip like a dancing-master, J—n takes it for granted that he will write and speak in like manner, sometimes piddling, sometimes bouncing, and bewray the like pertness and petulance in his style that he does in his walk. J—n insisteth also, that an ambulatory p——r (as he expresses himself), that is, one who walks in the class whilst he prelects to the students, is necessarily more eloquent than a stationary or sedentary professor, who reads or repeats his lectures sitting or leaning his backside against a desk : And when he applies those general observations to particulars, it is astonishing how exactly they tally. Thus honest J—n, you see, hath, like other great men, his own system ; and had he been a professor, it is probable he would have expatiated upon it, and taught it with very great applause. But J—n does not value himself so much upon his discoveries in philosophy as upon his knowledge in modern history and politics. Every newspaper that is sent to the c——e, J—n, after the example of Mr R——t, reads over three times from beginning to end without missing one word ; by which means he has all the events of the late war, and all the public transactions, upon his fingers ends : Here lies the strength of his erudition : Hereby he is very useful among the young folks, and communicates more knowledge to them than is done by some professors of history. Indeed when he takes his walk in the c——e-court, encircled with a ring of students listening to him, he may be justly deemed a kind of teacher or professor : But here too J—n discovers, that, like other great men, he hath his hobby-horse, for he takes unaccountable attachments to particular persons, and is eternally raving about valour, and heroism, and gallantry, and magnanimity, and martial renown : When Thurot was killed on the coast of Ireland, J—n declared publicly, that he had much

rather four of his Majesty's first-rate ships had been sunk than that the world had lost such a gallant captain. And when he read of the taking of Moro Castle, he seemed quite intoxicated (as I mentioned before) with admiration of the inflexible Veylaxcow, the hair-brained romantic Spaniard, who, you know, sacrificed himself so madly upon the breach. Whether these extravagancies proceed from a crack in J—n's brain, or from the vanity of being thought a man of magnanimous and heroic sentiments, (for honest J—n really fancies himself to be a bit of a hero) is a little dubious. However, upon the whole, J—n is thought a very honest man; was never accused of stealing a lump of coal, or even the end of a candle; would not for all the world make a lie; was seldom or never seen in any indecent passion, and lives upon amicable terms with all his fellow-servants of the c——: For these qualities, in Mr. Hutchefon's time, when virtue was esteemed to be something real and solid, honest J—n was held in much esteem both by the p——rs and by the st——ts: But of late, some newfangled fancies of sympathy with the rich and great having got into the c——e, and nothing being now regarded but money, and pomp, and parade, J—n finding himself overlooked, as being but a poor man, became desirous of retiring from business; and the reason he gave for this was perfectly agreeable to his theory, namely, that he was not now so eloquent, that is, not so feery o' the feet, as formerly. But it is time to return to the discovery of the address.

When J—n received the summons to appear before his learned betters, though he guessed the occasion of it, he was not in the least dismayed: He considered himself as the oldest constituent member of the society: He was conscious of his integrity, that he had talents and capacity equal to his office (which every one could not boast); and as to the address, having heard the c——e resound with encomiums

upon the elegance of its composition, and that it was thought worthy the learned d——r, he was rather vain on that head than otherwise : So that, except that he begrimmed his visage a little more than ordinary by putting in a cart of coals that morning, J——n showed as good a countenance upon the occasion as any of the company : And it was lucky for him that the p——r, who was chairman of the committee, was a mild tempered mighty good kind of man; and no keen friend to the learned d——r who had boldly professed himself to be author of the address that had been printed.

Well, John (says p——r ———— when he appeared before the committee), what's this you have been doing ? It seems you are grown feery o' the feet again. You have been writing an address to the king ?

Why tiewly, gentlemun, (says John), ye are my guid and learnit maisters, and thoch it be doan my fell owr muckle honnir, as I ha' na' the lair, I winna' mack a lie and dency it. I did a' far the best, and far the credit and exonuration o' the c——e.

Pr. So John : You are really then the author of the address ?

J. D. Indeed am I. I houp ye winna' tack it ill. I did a' for the best.

Pr. And pray, John, what could be your reasons for this strange proceeding ? Do you know the seven liberal sciences ? Do you know logic, and analytics, and synthetics ? Can you write a paper better than our whole faculty ?

J. D. Why, gentlemun, an' ye wad nac be angry, I wad tell ye a' frank and free. I ha' a real liking to the king : They say he is a guid honest king, and I thocht it wad do me guid to wret him far yins afore I die, and I houp hee'l no be the war for reading a paper of J——n D——ldf——n's macking up ; this was ae reason ; and anither was, I feared that the learnit mun that undertuck to wret the address, being apt to

fall into vagaries, wad forget the magnanimous man of the Moro, and a' the fine things that were dunt the war, and so the king wad na' ken how we stiddy the newspapers here, and ken about a' forran matters at our c——e. And anither reason was, that as I saw disputes running hy amang the maisters, some setts wad be for pitting out what ithers wad be for pitting in, and this wad mar the spirit o' the address; so I thocht it wad be better if it was a' dun bi' ane that cou'd gae throw it feerily and cannily, without being justled and jumbled as he wauked alang. And these are honestly my reasuns for doing what I did. I tauld you before, I gat na the lair: I ken naething about your lectix and thetix.

Pr. The incident is curious; the reasons given for it are curious; *ergo*, they are both curious. But pray, John, had you no assistance in penning the address? Where got you all the fine words and grand epithets you have stuffed into it?

J. D. Ay, ay, Sir, whare sud I get 'um but about the college, where they're always gaen thick and three fauld. O, Sir, I am not so eloquent as lang syne. I remember in Mr. Hutcheson's time, whun words and things baith war' gaen about the college like peas and groats, and a' the lads tauked philosophy then just as forthily as the Hiland lads tauk Greek now. I remember whun I wad be waiting on an Irish student at breckfust, he wad a poured out a firlof of bonny words: Then it was benevolins, and morril sense, and sense of honnir, and sense of ordir, and sense of hermuny in the works of creation: But now a' these are awa', clean awa' and out o' doars; and now it is sympathy, and propriety, and beating of time, and if I may so say, and about feuds, and feudals, and monny mae oddious words. But I am not so feery i' the feet to be ganging about as I used amang the maisters and the lads to pick them up. It is a' words, ye ken,

that ony body gets heer, and as they're gaen I get my nain skair o' them.

Pr. Indeed, John, and you seem to have a good share of them. I'll warrant that when your hand was in for writing, you have been assisting too at that mongril and dastardly Donaldsoniad, which hath cost us so much money to suppress?

J. D. O, Sirs! dinna' treat poor auld John that way. I wret nane o't: Gin I had it wad a been muckle better: Gin the learnit mun had geen me the four guineas, and the assistance yon lads gat, I wad a defendit my nain address, and made 'em repent that middled wi't, without a' yon swearing, and abusing Bunyan, and Flavel, and the Whole Duty of Man, and mocking at Hell and Sighs frae Hell, whilk are no things to be sported wi'.

Pr. Hold, John, you must not throw out things so indiscreetly, and give reason for any of us being suspected of such things.

J. D. Ay, ay; I ken what I ken.

Pr. Well, but keep it to yourself; or take care where you speak it: And for the address, since you would be writing one, why did you not put in something about learning and the beaux's arts?

J. D. Trewly, Sir, I did intend, for Mr. F——s's sake, to have said something about the bo's arts, and to hae tauld the king o' the bonny shew that we mak here wi' our peictures on his birth day; but the man o' the Moro ran sae in my head, that I forgot it. O Gentlemun! he was a gritt mun, certainly he was bred 'at some gritt college, and nae doubt was a gritt mathematician, or a politician, or a logician, or a metaphysician, or a——

Pr. John, this man of the Moro seems to have turned your head; but though you forgot learning and the beaux's arts, why did you forget purity of morals and religion? These were very suitable topics to be in a college address.

Here John scratched his head and said nothing.

Pr. I say, why did you not say something about purity of morals?

Here John gave a heavy sigh.

Pr. Why did you say nothing about religion?

John shook his head three times with great violence, and then fetched a hollow and deadly groan. Recovering himself a little, he at last said :

Gentlemen, it's no my business to speak or tell you what I think about these matters ; but your address is no tint ; I teuk it hame wi' me whun I sent awa' my nain, and gin ye like I'll gang and fetch you your ain address : It is lying in a neuk of our saatfat, carefully preserved, and just as fraesh as whun it was to ha' been sent to the king.

So John went out, and returned with the authentic address, (a copy of which I here inclose to you) and the gentlemen of the ———, ashamed and vexed as they were, yet finding they had to do with a poor old doating body, who had got a wild conceit into his head of writing to the king before he died, thought proper to let the matter pass as a joke, seeing no better could be made of it. It was indeed evident, from the whole behaviour of the Chairman, that he intended the affair should have an amicable issue. When he had finished John's examination, he concluded the sederunt by repeating in a dispassionate and careless manner the following lines from Hudibras :

Quoth he, that man is sure to lose
That fouls his hand with dirty foes ;
For when no honour's to be gain'd,
'Tis thrown away in being maintain'd.
'Twas ill for us we had to do
With so dishonourable a foe.

With regard to the authentic address, which is at last discovered in the manner I have related, I shall not endeavour to anticipate your judgment, especially as I am not skilled in these matters. I shall only ob-

serve, that it is not quite so laconic and pithy as a former address that was sent up to be presented to his Majesty, conceived precisely in the following terms: "May it please your Majesty to fill up our vacant pr—fr—p;" but it runs upon such points as are proper for an university address: For as the interest and improvement of trade, salutary laws and regulations in favour of civil liberty and the police of the country, are the natural topics for boroughs to enlarge upon in their addresses to the throne; so the interest of religion and morality, and the advancement of science and taste, are topics in like manner naturally appropriated to the clergy and the universities.

After all, I can hardly conceal from you a surmise that begins to gain a little credit here: Some connoisseurs are whispering about, with many significant nods, that what I now send you is not yet the authentic address which J—n D———n produced: They pretend to have got certain intelligence about some secret, strange, and mysterious management in this affair, and do not scruple to affirm, that a certain weaver in town, an old scholar of Mr. Hutcheson, was applied to, and prevailed upon (they do not say by whom) to draw up the address inclosed. However, for aught I have heard, these shrewd, mistrustful, and inquisitive gentlemen, are not very numerous; so that I believe I had best not have taken any notice of them at all, lest I may have thereby raised some doubts in your mind. I have informed you at large concerning the current report, and if it should happen that there is really some truth in what has been surmised, I shall soon write to you again, that you may not remain long in any uncertainty about this matter. I am,

Sir,

Your most humble Servant.

Glasg. March 1763.

AN ADDRESS OF _____.

“ May it please your Majesty,

“ WE, _____, most humbly beg leave to congratulate your Majesty upon the birth of a prince; an event doubly grateful to your affectionate people, as it crowns your conjugal felicity with the joys of a parent, and the public felicity with the joyful prospect that the same blessings we now enjoy under your Majesty’s government will be perpetuated to posterity in the heir of your crown, and (as it is natural to hope) the heir also of your personal virtues.

“ We beg leave at the same time to congratulate your Majesty upon those other joyful events with which providence hath been pleased to bless the auspicious commencement of your reign; the glorious successes of your arms against our proud and perfidious enemies; those multiplied victories, those vast and various acquisitions which are become almost difficult to be enumerated: These, the effects of your wise councils, will ever be acknowledged by your grateful people. But these are a small part only of the blessings they have reason to hope for from the benign influence of your government. From what they have already experienced of your Royal virtues, they easily discern that the trophies of war will yield to those of peace; that the former, acquired by your Majesty with regret, as being built on the miseries of mankind, will be infinitely surpassed by the latter, built upon their happiness, and in acquiring of which your Majesty can give full scope to the natural bent of your disposition. What a ravishing prospect opens to your people on the establishment of the peace, which your Majesty’s humanity inclines you to give to your prostrate enemies! Taste, and genius, and the fine arts, long drooping and neglected, find in

your Majesty an enlightened judge, and at the same time a generous patron. Science and useful learning bloom again, cheered by the sun-shine of your Royal munificence; integrity and economy display themselves in every branch of the administration; public spirit rears its head, and the baneful sons of corruption desponding fly before it. Illustrious these, and truly regal trophies, whilst greater still remain to be recounted. How have irreligion and immorality prevailed in these nations, to the disgrace of human reason; till at length, animated by your Majesty's example, the public in their esteem prefer the man of correct morals to the fashionable debauchee; the faithful and affectionate husband prides himself in imitating your conjugal tenderness; and genuine piety, seated on the throne, is no longer the wanton scoff of the sceptic and the profligate: These are triumphs over ignorance, vice, and impiety, worthy human nature, worthy of your Majesty; triumphs peculiar to yourself, and in the glory of which your generals and your admirals had no share. Thus, whilst you extend the British empire by your arms, you cherish and adorn it with your virtues, and unite in your Royal Person the exalted characters of the great Trajan and the good Aurelius. Long, therefore, under the peculiar protection of Divine Providence, may your Majesty and your Royal Consort shine, the delight and ornament of the present age; and may a faithful copy of your virtues, with all their blessed consequences, descend to posterity in the dear person of the Prince of Wales."

THE
TRIAL OF A STUDENT

IN THE
COLLEGE OF CLUTHA

IN THE
KINGDOM OF OCEANA.

INNUMERABLE are the advantages which we of this age enjoy, since the recovery and publication of *Fingal* and *Temora*. The primeval state of our Celtic ancestors is clearly set before us. Our ancient heroes appear to have been as valorous as *Hector* and *Achilles*, and our bards as able as ever *Homer* was to sing and record their magnanimous feats.

In particular, one great blessing derived to us from these Gaelic songs, is, that we are made acquainted with new countries and islands, or old names of them at least, which otherwise we could never have known; names so new, so sonorous, and mellifluous, that they strike our ears with delight.

The island of *Oceana*, the city and university of *Clutha*, are amongst these new discoveries; for I will venture to lay it down as an orthodox principle, and undeniable fact, in the beginning of this my history, that the name of *Clutha* hath never been heard of by any person in Great Britain, France, or Ireland, except by those who have perused *Fingal*. But I would fain indulge the vanity of an author, and please myself with the hope that *Clutha* shall become universally known by the history I am going to write.

Whereabouts this *Clutha* is situated I do not find

to be particularly described. Our Celtic bards have been so rapt and possessed by the poetic fury, that their geography is the less exact. Oceana, however, appears to have been either in the great Atlantic Ocean, or on the east side of it; or, for any thing that can now be demonstrated to the contrary, it may have been some large province, and Clutha some sort of ancient city within the four British seas. But where Clutha was, or what modern city was anciently called by that name, it is not my business or design to inquire. If the real facts which I transmit to posterity are esteemed honourable, any university that pleases is welcome to assume the name of Clutha: If the facts are condemned, every university is at full liberty to disclaim that name, and to demonstrate, by learned dissertations, that it is not Clutha. But it is time to leave the introduction, and begin the history.

Chap. 1. IT appears to every serious and thinking person, that Clutha must have been in a country where civil government was established, and where learning was pursued; of the first a parliament is a proof, as an university is of the last. We find that freedom of debate was believed to be the privilege of parliament. We read of eloquent speeches delivered there; some parts of which will be afterwards particularly taken notice of in the body of this history. And though I am not to discuss the point till I have received some ancient papers, which may furnish materials for a future performance, the constitution seems to have been very different from any thing that exists at present; for the university had a right to examine into, to judge, and to condemn the speeches made in parliament, and even to degrade and punish those who delivered them. All that was alleged against the student was wrong expressions. It was for words or improper expressions that he was forced to undergo that trial of which I write the history.

Chap. 2. Politicians, or political writers, have la-

boured to show, that in the different stages or periods of society, such as the savage, the barbarous, the civilized, the commercial, the sentiments and manners of men have been very different. But to me it appears, that the professors of colleges have at all times, and in every period or state of society, been very much the same: Those of Clutha pretended, and would have had it believed, that the prosecution which they carried on against one of their young students proceeded from their indignation against heresy or profaneness. But the ancient inhabitants of Clutha could give no credit to their pretensions, but suspected that their keenness in that matter must flow from some motive of interest. They examined, and found that the whole affair had taken its rise from a cause which many will think trifling. One of the professors, who kept many boarders, had still an empty room, and hearing of a rich lad, who was easy to maintain, he invited him to his house; he refused at first, but afterwards went; and the professor by mistake imagined his refusal was owing to some advice he had got from the student who was afterwards so hotly persecuted. In truth, no person in Clutha could bring himself to imagine, that a few improper terms in an extemporary speech, without any other provocation, could raise such an abiding rage in the breasts of the mortified teachers of true orthodox belief.

Chap. 3. Here I beg the reader to indulge me the liberty of a short digression, because it is but half a digression. I am, and have ever been, much of the same opinion with the people of Clutha in the point mentioned in the last chapter. In all the church history I have read, and from all the observations I have made of kirk men and kirk courts, in the course of my life, I never met with a single instance of a process against error, heresy, or impiety, which I could believe to arise purely from the love of truth and religion. If it shall be asked, from what source, then,

do such processes spring? I answer, they spring from envy and hatred of superior talents; from differing from some zealous divines, and thereby seeming to disparage their understanding; or Titius the theologian raises a cry of heresy against Sempronius the theologian, because this last is like to step into a fat benefice, which Titius had set his heart on, and thinks he much better deserves. I have heard of a violent process against a learned professor, because he called some clergymen, who afterwards became his persecutors, ignorant, and country Mass Johns. I knew a heresy process, founded on a sermon that had been published for several years, and was believed to be sound and good, ever till the author of it was just going to be advanced. But enough of this; Clutha is my subject.

Chap. 4. When Russia proclaims war against Prussia, there is a real ground of that step, and an ostensible one; the real one is kept in petto, and the ostensible one is published to the world. It was just so at Clutha: Not a word was said about the boarder; the poor student was charged with some indecent and disrespectful expressions: He had also, it seems, with some degree of freedom, disputed the justness or utility of some axioms about logic or metaphysics advanced by one of the professors, and had been listened to and applauded by his fellow-students. Besides, he had joined with those who opposed the views of some of the masters at the late election of a rector; and it was suspected he would act in the same manner at next election. He was allowed to be a lad of genius and application, of a lively imagination, and who spoke his meaning in bold and nervous expressions. He seemed to inquire, and think for himself; and, unhappily for him, one of such a turn was at that time a very unwelcome scholar at the college of Clutha. The most part of the teachers had put over all their reading and inquiry when they were very

young, and were now unalterably fixed in a set of good, sound, orthodox principles. Of these principles, indeed, they had but a few; but then those they had were good enough; and they had such love to their scholars, that they wished them to think just as they thought: And they were so barren in style, that they had not above one phrase to express any particular sentiment, and were so wonderfully wedded to their own peculiar phrases, that if a student happened to express one of their sentiments in any other but their own words, they concluded that he differed from their way of thinking, and looked upon him with some degree of pity, contempt, or aversion.

Chap. 5. I am obliged, as a faithful historian, to take notice here, that there were, at this time, two parties or factions in the college. The most numerous consisted of fellows such as I have described in the fourth chapter. They were, moreover, generally of a recluse, unsocial temper; owing either to imbecillity of body, or unwillingness to keep company for fear of being put to expence. In the other party there was one who was esteemed a thorough scholar, and another, a scholar also, of a liberal turn, and who had seen the world; and some two or three more, whose characters the memoirs of Clutha have not very exactly transmitted to us. But it happened, that if a student was in the good graces of the one faction, the other was sure to dislike him, and do him what ill offices they could. Each party was intent upon encouraging those only who adhered to it, by recommending them to be tutors to young gentlemen, or to bursaries, which were annual sums of money provided for the support of students at Clutha. And from what I have already faithfully narrated, it will easily be believed that young lads were seldom in any case, never by the prevailing party, recommended or provided for on account of their learning, but for the narrowness of their notions, and for that humbleness

of soul which fitted them to be the subaltern tools of faction.

Chap. 6. It hath been affirmed by grave politicians, that a little faction in any state or community is not a very bad or dangerous thing, provided it be kept within tolerable bounds, and the keenness of party rage be restrained, or conducted by good manners. Faction, thus managed, they allege, strengthens and enlarges the powers of the human mind, and brings forth those latent talents which otherwise would never have appeared. And they think they prove the point by what, in fact, happened at Athens and Rome, where, in times of faction, the ablest statesmen, the completest generals, and the most eloquent orators, were produced : But though this may be the case with respect to civil communities, I apprehend, that with respect to literary seminaries, such as the college of Clutha, factions must ever produce the most lamentable effects. When the teachers are known to be split into factions, to live at variance, and to despise and hate one another, this, at any rate, must have a fatal influence upon the students ; for, either they must look on strife and contention as no vices, or not inconsistent with a virtuous character, and so enter into the pitiful views of their respective masters, and hate and revile those whom they hate ; or else they must despise their masters as vicious and immoral, and grow indifferent about the lectures they deliver, be they ever so sensible and beautiful.

Chap. 7. It was not any immoral action with which the student at Clutha was charged, but expressions thrown out in extemporary speeches, alleged to be indecent or abusive : These expressions were, that in endeavouring to show that adversity is more favourable to virtue than prosperity, after advancing other arguments, he said, that the position might be illustrated from what had been the sentiments of the writers of romance and of real history ; he said, “ The

pious Eneas and the disinterested Don Quixote ;— the son of Sophroniscus and the son of Mary, triumphed in adversity.” On another occasion, when it had been alleged by some gentlemen that the present methods of teaching morality were defective, and by others, that that defect was supplied by sermons from the pulpit, he said, “ that morality would be better taught at a well regulated theatre” (such as was described in a petition given in by the magistrates of Clutha, and a very perfect one indeed it was) “ than by sermons in which morality was so seldom insisted on, and so much was said on the trite doctrines or subjects of faith and repentance.” He also alleged, that “ the inhabitants of Clutha were, in consequence of commerce, sordidly avaricious ; and that the ladies of Clutha needed the amusements of the theatre, because, having no such diversion, they lived reclusely, and sat up too late playing at cards, by which they lost their bloom, and brought diseases on themselves, which occasioned their death.” And, lastly, he is charged with having said, “ that the youth would be better instructed or entertained at the theatre than in the drowsy shops of logic and metaphysics.”

Chap. 8. The whole expressions judged by the professors of Clutha to be shocking or impious, are faithfully set down in the former chapter of this history : And, according to all accounts, they were uttered some time in the winter or spring immediately preceding this remarkable trial : And that it may appear, that though in the geography or topography of Clutha I am not perfectly instructed, yet, in point of chronology, I am accurate even to a day ; I can assure the reader, that one of the speeches was delivered just five weeks and five days before the college began to take the precognition : And it is evident, from the depositions of a cloud of witnesses, that, during all that time, there was in the city of Clutha no complaint of the speech, nor any fault found with for

much as a single expression in it, except by one individual person, whose particular notions and views I have not been able to learn exactly: But it is in proof, that the inhabitants of Clutha who had heard the speeches, so far from being dissatisfied, did highly and universally commend them; so that it was believed that these commendations helped on the criminal process, just as the commendations given to the sermon I mentioned before stirred up the envy and animosity of the warm theologians against the author of it; which, together with the grief which some of them felt at his being advanced, made them violent and furious in a process of heresy before the ecclesiastical courts.

Chap. 9. There were only two speeches upon some expressions of which the learned professors founded their criminal indictment. One of these speeches was in the very parliament of Oceana, and the other in a numerous club called the general society. In the one of these assemblies seven or eight of the learned professors were in the mean time present; in both of them, besides students, there were present a great number of the nobility, the best educated inhabitants and enlightened merchants of Clutha: And in order to throw light upon the subsequent part of this memorable history, it is proper to remark here, that in neither of the speeches was this unfortunate student interrupted, no person called him to order, no professor, no citizen of Clutha showed the slightest disapprobation of any of those expressions which afterwards kindled such a pious fury in the souls of the professors, were made use of as the subject of a criminal indictment, and brought the young man into so smart and long distress: And to this day it is mysterious and altogether unaccountable, that expressions which appeared no way shocking when they were uttered, should appear so at so great a distance of time when they were recollected.

Chap. 10. The prevailing party of Clutha college

having, for the reasons hinted at above, and others to be afterwards explained, conceived a permanent and implacable rage against the student, and having been secretly at uncommon pains to paint him out to the lowest and most bigotted part of the citizens as a dangerous heretic and a profane infidel, thought it was now time to fall openly to work. With this view, some of them alleged, in a college meeting, that there was a *fama clamosa* against the student; but others declared, they had not till that moment heard of any such *fama*; and one professor protested, that those who had made the motion should be held as informers against the student and the raisers of the *fama clamosa*. This frightened and checked them for a little; but they soon recovered their spirit, and summoned a great number of citizens, of merchants, and students, to find out before-hand what expressions the student had uttered, how shocking they appeared, and what impiety was implied in them. Four or five of these professors, who were to be judges in the matter, offered themselves as witnesses, and were precognosced: And, as they had contrived this criminal process, and were so eager to find grounds for commencing it, it will not appear strange, that their declarations were, of all others, the most acrimonious and severe. Besides, as none of those professors were any way remarkable for the practice of morality, so none of them had ever been reputed very strict in the principles of orthodox belief. This last part of their character they were sensible of, and hoped to avail themselves of it: For they expected, with great confidence, that the citizens of Clutha would universally conclude, that these principles must be perverse and dangerous to a very extraordinary degree, which had drawn on a persecution from such professors. They believed, therefore, that as soon as the process should commence, the student would be looked upon with universal hatred and contempt by the inhabitants of Clutha.

tha. But they were mistaken, as the sequel will demonstrate.

Chap. 11. It is agreed I believe among political writers, that human society, after a long progress in civilisation and refinement, verges back again to corruption. And this too, it would seem, is the case with respect to colleges; at least it must have been so with respect to that of Clutha. It was certainly at this time in a lamentable state of darkness and the vilest corruption. In any former period of that college, if a student had used improper expressions, or even erred in opinion, or committed some ill action, the masters, feeling the tutorial, and even parental affection, would have sent for him to their houses, instructed him in private, and admonished him, that, for the future, he might avoid every thing in his behaviour or speech that was wrong or might give offence. But at this time the benighted and inhumane teachers were utter strangers to their duty, and to all the soft and tender sentiments of the heart. Though this was confessedly the student's first offence, they disdained to instruct, to admonish, or correct him. They allowed themselves to think of nothing but measures the most inquisitorial and severe; so that one is tempted to suspect, that at this time some cruel and pitiful Jesuits, driven from the northern parts of Spain, or of Portugal, or of ———, had, by disguising themselves, got into that poor unhappy college, and were now beginning to unmask themselves.

Chap. 12. For several weeks the student had observed that his masters did not look upon him as formerly. He saw, in their eyes and gestures, evident marks of anger and aversion: And as he had liberally paid them, and gave all the attention he could to their lectures, he was at a loss to understand the reason of their being dissatisfied with him. He saw them often in whispering conversations with the college servants, and with the most bigotted and fanatical persons in

the city, whose company almost all university men had ever hitherto avoided. By degrees he learned that these servile and ignorant people were hounded out to inflame the city against him, to raise what was called a *fama clamosa*, and to prepare matters for a precognition. This he looked upon in the tremendous view of a determined and merciless inquisition: He was alarmed and terrified in a very high degree, anxious and dissipated by day, and in the night could neither sleep nor rest. In this unhappy situation he often threw himself in the way of the most furious of the professors; but they looked on him with disdain, and declined to converse with him: He, therefore, once and again, wrote letters to them, in a very submissive strain, explaining the terms that he now heard were thought offensive, and disclaiming any wrong belief with respect to religion, or any disrespect to any of the sciences. But these letters gave the masters no satisfaction: He then went round to the house of every professor, declared he was sorry he had given offence, and offered, that if they would lay aside the thoughts of expelling him, he would submit to any admonition or rebuke which they should judge reasonable. One of his friends also waited on all the professors, and made the same offer: But all their offers were equally fruitless; severe measures were already agreed to; a criminal trial, by the issue of which it was resolved to strip the student of his bursary: And it was impossible, by any submission or repentance, to bring these teachers of benevolence and humanity to relent in the slightest degree.

Chap. 13. I have related above, that much artifice and pains had been employed to inflame the city of Clutha against the young logician; and as in one of his speeches he had used some unpremeditated expressions, which were construed in a bad sense, and alleged to refer to that people, it was no doubt expected, that their indignation would arise against a

person, who, it was affirmed, had abused them; and it is beyond all doubt, that it was with this view that such expressions were published in the city: But the citizens of Clutha judged and acted quite differently from what the professors wished and expected. No sooner did the generous inhabitants of that city hear that a violent prosecution was resolved on, founded upon causes which to them seemed totally groundless, but they instantly determined to support the persecuted student: They subscribed a paper, binding themselves to lend him money to defray the expence of so unnecessary and spiteful a process. This contribution in the cause of liberty, and to support a young person who was a stranger (for he had resorted to the college from some distant part of the island), is an illustrious part of the character of the citizens of Clutha: For it is a demonstration, that however deeply that ancient people were engaged in commerce, they were of a liberal turn of mind, and when they saw a proper occasion, interested themselves in behalf of a poor and innocent stranger, in opposition to the tyranny of bigotted pedants and furious ecclesiastics.

Chap. 14. It may, however, without any sort of reflection, be well supposed, that the inhabitants of Clutha were not all of the generous sentiments I have just now taken notice of; there were many in that city, whose hearts were hardened by means of commerce; many, who had never read any other book but those which conveyed the narrowest ideas about religious belief, and which seem to have been much of the same kind with those called chapman books, so much complained of in the present age: In short, there were many of the people, who had all their lives trembled to converse with any person, who, upon the most abstruse and disputed points, was believed to think any ways differently from themselves; many who, since they travelled with a pack upon their backs, had never travelled beyond the suburbs

of the city ; and some who conversed and disputed with none but five or six persons who lived next to their shops. All the above sorts of people had this remarkable ingredient in their character, that whenever an ill thing was said of any man, they, without any examination, immediately, and thoroughly, and stubbornly believed it, however improbable it might appear : Besides, all this body of people I now speak of, were, in their religious ideas, entirely guided by the lower presbyters, which seem to have been a kind of demagogues in that age and place. By the great activity of the professors, a few of these leaders had been gained, and some kind of alarm began at last to rise in the city. Though the expressions uttered were no other than I have mentioned, the report of the student's lax principles being once set on foot, he was, by degrees, painted out in blacker and blacker colours ; and from the above expressions, thrown out at random, came at last to be suspected by some of the lowest inhabitants of Clutha, of Socinianism, of Deism, and even of infidelity ; some of which terms, as he was so young, he had probably never heard of ; and no reasonable person did imagine that any of these perverse ways of thinking had ever entered into his head.

Chap. 15. Such was the situation of things at Clutha, when the college came to the fatal resolution of giving an indictment : The student was alarmed ; the best part of the citizens eager to support him ; the professors still more eager to prosecute him ; and the meaner part of the citizens imagining, by this time, that he had some wrong principles, were some of them indifferent, some of them content, some desirous, and others zealous to have him condemned, and expelled the college. Simple expulsion would indeed have been no censure or punishment at all ; for at this time the college of Clutha was in a very sorry and pitiable situation : Not above one or two of its

professors were any ways eminent for talents : The capacity of the greater part of them was not above that of a very ordinary country schoolmaster ; and if they had set up to teach out of a college, no man would have trusted them with the education of his son ; so that to be expelled from such a college, might, by intelligent people, be esteemed a favour rather than a punishment. But then this student had got and enjoyed a rich burfary, and, by expulsion, he would have been stripped of it : And, as an accurate historian, I must remark, that he had obtained this burfary, which had been mortified by, and was in the gift of a noble family, in opposition to those professors who were now intent to have him expelled ; and who hoped by that means, as was believed, to get the burfary to a student whom they had formerly recommended. This view, it was universally believed, rendered them the more sanguine in the prosecution. Indeed, I can with great truth affirm, that this burfary was the sole cause of this criminal process ; for, if the young logician had not enjoyed it, he would, upon the slightest disgust of the professors, have quietly, and even gladly departed from their college ; for young as he was, though he revered them as his masters, he had too much quickness not to discern, that they were most of them totally unqualified for the offices into which, by intrigue and faction, the vilest of all talents, they had been called.

Chap. 16. After fifty meetings of the prevailing party, where the other faction either were not admitted or did not choose to attend, they agreed on the measures they were to pursue. With great attention they examined the precognition, and found there was ample foundation for a trial : There were six or seven of them who concurred in this step ; and at first they were determined that the libel or indictment should be given by the college : But though they were engaged in the business, they were willing

to avoid the name and character of inquisitors; and with this view they endeavoured to conceal their rigour by a gauze covering, which was easily seen through: 'They choosed a procurator-fiscal, *pro re nata*: 'They were to be judges in the matter, and four or five of them were eagerly desirous to appear as witnesses: And by this silly artifice, of choosing a procurator-fiscal, they hoped so to blindfold the people, that they should not be also held as prosecutors. But besides that this step was believed to be illegal, and what they had no right to, it failed of the effect they designed by it. The whole people of Clutha saw and believed them to be the prosecutors; and when they foolishly said, that not they but the procurator-fiscal was the prosecutor, a spirited witness briskly told them to their face, in open court, that they were in fact the prosecutors, and that he looked at realities rather than appearances.

Chap. 17. On a Thursday, which answers to the 2d day of our June, the criminal court was opened. The masters of the college appeared in their best gowns. One of them assumed the character and office of vice-rector (for the lord rector was not yet arrived.) All of them took their seats with an awkward solemnity and pomp, which, in truth, excited a mixture of contempt and ridicule: One gentleman in court, who either was or expected to be a judge, could not help saying, upon the occasion, so loud as to be overheard, *Simia quam similis turpissima bestia nobis*. They had but an uneasy time of it; for they could not but observe, from the very looks and air of the spectators, that there was not a single person present who did not condemn the judges, and was affectionately interested on the side of the pannel.

Chap. 18. The judges being seated, the procurator-fiscal produced and read the indictment, which was tedious, consisting of three or four sheets of paper battered together; but it was exactly to the fol-

Howing purpose. You ———, student and bur-
 far in this college, having thrown off all fear of God,
 respect to religion, and reverence for the sciences,
 and the learned professors of this university, did main-
 tain, that adversity is more favourable to virtue than
 prosperity; and in proving that point from romance
 and real history, you said, that the pious Eneas and
 the disinterested Don Quixote;—the son of Sophro-
 niscus and the son of Mary, triumphed in adversity.
 And at another time, when one in the club complain-
 ed, that the present methods of teaching morality
 were defective, as being altogether theoretical, and
 not calculated to mend the heart; and another had
 said, that that defect was supplied by sermons from
 the pulpit; you did deny that it was so supplied,
 and alleged profanely, that sermons were too often
 on doctrinal points, and on the trite subjects of faith
 and repentance, and that morality might be better
 taught by the theatre. You also said, that the mer-
 chants of Clutha were sordidly avaricious; and that
 the ladies, by their recluse way of living, and by sit-
 ting up too late playing at cards, lost their bloom, and
 brought diseases on themselves, which occasioned their
 death. Nor did you stop at all this, but proceeded
 to talk ignorantly, disrespectfully, and contemptu-
 ously of the learned sciences, by saying, profanely and
 impiously, that the students would be more improv-
 ed or better entertained at the theatre than in the
 drowsy shops of logic and metaphysics; by which
 you plainly discovered your malignity, and your se-
 cret contempt of the learned and ingenious professors
 who teach these sciences. All which, or any part
 thereof, being proved, you ought to be punished with
 expulsion, or otherwise censured.

Chap. 19. The indictment consisted of many more
 words, but not of more ideas; for I have faithfully
 narrated the full substance of it. The pannel denied
 it in common form, and gave in a paper containing

an explication of the expressions libelled, which was much the same with that given in the two letters he wrote to the professors before they began to take the precognition. The judges were not satisfied with the explication, and Comalo appeared as counsel for the pannel. Comalo, as I have learned, was either a relation of, or descended from the ancient Comalo, so much celebrated in Ossian's Poems. This young lawyer was in stature rather below the ordinary size; but when he appeared in court, there was a stern severity in his looks, and becoming dignity in his manner, which struck every person with awe and respect. He made a very accurate and manly speech, in which he objected to the competency of the court, and the relevancy of the libel. He maintained, that some of the expressions libelled, as seeming to imply a very high crime, were only cognoscible by the high judicary court; that if the college had any power of that sort formerly, it was entirely abolished by the jurisdiction act: He objected particularly to the step of choosing a procurator-fiscal, which he said was dangerous, as it was erecting themselves into a criminal court without any authority, and contrary to law. He concluded with assuring the professors, that he had a sincere regard for their college, that he saw them pursuing dangerous measures, at which their rival colleges would laugh and rejoice: He therefore requested them, that, for their own sakes, they would desist, and take no further steps in a matter where they had taken many illegal and unwarrantable steps already; that if they should persist, he did not know what might be the consequence. In short, he told them, that, in his opinion, the explication now given was enough to satisfy any reasonable person; but if they were not yet satisfied, if they would but erase the word expulsion in the libel, he engaged that his client would just now submit to any rebuke or admonition they should judge proper. Every person

present, who had the least degree of good will to the college, sincerely wished that they might be so wise as take the opportunity offered them to get out of the embarrassing difficulties in which their indiscretion had involved them. But they were too obstinate, or had gone too far to recede.

Chap. 20. The first sederunt was held in a narrow chamber, where people were so squeezed that it was difficult to stay in the court: Five or six merchants with difficulty pressed out, and went into the college porter's to refresh themselves with a draught of something or other. They had heard the libel, and thought all the several articles to be totally frivolous, and irrelevant to infer any the least censure. One of these gentlemen expressed himself with respect to the last article nearly in the following terms: "When the young man," he said, "had occasion to mention the sciences of logic and metaphysics, he hath, in my opinion, been excessively modest; he only called the schools where these sciences are retailed drowsy shops, but he ought to have said a great deal more; for it is evident, that metaphysical speculations have a bad effect upon the understanding: If my son who is now entering on business, shall dip into metaphysics, he will be a bad merchant, and, which is worse, he will turn out to be a bad man. These speculations, alas! vitiate the heart, and benumb its moral feelings. Every profound investigation operates in that manner. These deep theories leave all the passions of men in their full force. Whilst speculations are playing in the metaphysician's head, his heart lies open to every impulse of appetite, whether it be avarice, licentiousness, or cruelty, or whatever vice he is prone to by the natural bent of his temper. Avarice in particular, as you may learn from this very trial, seems to be the characteristic of these speculative gentlemen: Their humane affections, if ever they had any, are altogether chilled; they are possessed of a callousness

of heart, and are able to see the distresses of the miserable with an undisturbed tranquillity. Consider how they act in life, how they are acting just now, and you need no other proof of the ancient remark, that super-celestial-opinions, and subterraneous practices, are commonly found to be of singular accord. Did you ever know a skilful metaphysician, or acute theorist, who was exempt from covetousness, nay, who was not more covetous than ordinary? They put me in mind of ravenous birds which soar high in the clouds, but are observed to keep their eye downward, fixed directly on their prey. Unhappy was the state of this country, in some former periods, when almost every man was a metaphysician; and of such a wild and wretched scene we may easily form some notion, from the avarice, the faction, the brawling, and contention, that prevail in this very college. Shall I ever see the happy day, when these speculative sophists shall be held in a still more universal contempt than at present! shall be avoided as ravenous wolves, or totally hunted out of the country!"

Chap. 21. By this time the gentleman was almost out of breath; but after he had paused a little, and walked three or four times across the room, he took his seat, and proceeded with a still more serious and solemn air than before: Gentlemen, he said, it runs strongly in my head, that this persecuted student must be a real believer of the gospel; and I wish he be not persecuted on that very account. His dislike of metaphysics is to me a proof that he is a serious and firm believer; young as he is, he hath discovered the dangerous tendency of metaphysical science, and is I fear, for that reason, unwelcome at this college. Metaphysics, you may depend, is always accompanied with some degree of scepticism or infidelity. Your metaphysical gentlemen deal in thin and subtile arguments, till they reason themselves out of all religion, and doubt of that which of all things is

the least doubtful. There hath been in this city a great and visible decline of religion, and some allege that this is owing to our increasing opulence; but there are other places as opulent where a reverence for religion is retained. Irreligion hardly ever gains ground, except when it is supported by wild speculative tenets, or dry metaphysical theories; theories, which, in our times, have been employed to undermine natural and revealed religion, and to introduce materialism.—To be convinced, gentlemen, that this metaphysical sophistry, and not the increase of wealth, is the cause why religion is disregarded, you need only consider the state of religion where this sophistry flourishes most, and that is within the precincts of the college. Can any man say, that the learned gentlemen are more just and generous, more meek and humble, than the opulent merchants of the city? Was it owing to opulence that public prayers were disused in the college? Was it owing to opulence, that many years ago, all the masters discontinued the religious instructions which used to be given on Sunday evenings? Is it owing to opulence, that professors, who have formerly been ministers, take it as an affront to be desired to say prayers in a private family in the country, or in a charitable corporation in the city? And if any licentious principles have been imbibed by the students, is not this owing not to opulence, but to the sloth of the masters, to their metaphysical inquiries, and recommending dangerous books to the youth, or not cautioning them against them? Believe me, that neither opulence, nor pride, nor that indolence which is somehow natural to men of learning, is sufficient to account for all this. It is that metaphysical and fatal scepticism, whispered and communicated from one professor to another, and from them derived to the unhappy students, which is the cause of all that irreligion and infidelity we complain of. The student against whom

we have heard so pitiful an indictment read, did therefore right in so far. With great propriety, he pronounced logics and metaphysics to be drowsy sciences; but he should also have shown the danger of them; for every honest man, every well-wisher of religion, should strive, if possible, to bring such pernicious sciences into absolute disgrace; or, if that cannot yet be done, to prevent the spreading of that spurious and disputatious learning, which misleads the understanding, corrupts the heart, subverts religion, introduces scepticism and gloomy infidelity, and mars the great interests and comforts of mankind. These sciences never taught any man to speak or think justly. You shall hear a logician, in speaking of a criminal process, absurdly distinguish between a trial and a prosecution; and one who knows the geometry of visibles, visibly deficient in common sense.

Chap. 22. This gentleman was listened to with silent attention; and it appeared that the rest of the company, who were all citizens of Clutha, nearly agreed with him in the sentiments he had delivered. I'll lay my life, said one of them, that the disparaging expressions about logic and metaphysics are at the bottom of this process, and have raised the dudgeon of these metaphysicians fifty times more than the two expressions pretended to be disrespectful of religion: But why at this time of day such a sputter about these obsolete and unintelligible sciences? In times of ignorance they might possibly be esteemed; but the man who would now recommend them to the public esteem, comes by far too late; for, except in the cells of monks, or colleges of pedants, they bear no value, and are never so much as spoken of. The art of reasoning is a gift of nature, and the rules of logic are of use to none but those who can reason well enough without them; and many specimens of just reasoning were given before logic was reduced to principles.

Metaphysics I ever believed to be useless; and I am alarmed at the pernicious consequences of that science which you have now mentioned: For my part, when I consider all this, I think it lucky that the student expressed himself as he did. His speech may very probably stir up this opulent city immediately to set on foot such an academy as was proposed a few years ago; by which means a stop will be put to scepticism and infidelity; taste will be improved; practical morality and true religion, in their natural simplicity and beauty, taught and recommended to our youth; and then we may leave the professors in the secure and unenvied possession of their logic, their ontological systems, and metaphysical speculations.

Chap. 23. The reader will perhaps imagine, that I have made an improper digression, and almost lost sight of the trial, the history of which I had proposed to write. But, in order to give as just an idea of it as possible, I judged it material to set down, as I have done, with great faithfulness, some of the sentiments of people without doors: And I now resume the thread of my story. As the faculty-room could contain but a few people, the court, at the pannel's desire, adjourned to a large hall, where his friends might have room to be present and countenance him. At the second sederunt, six rounds of speeches were delivered from the bench, which I intend not to insert in this history. These speeches of the judges, together with those delivered by them afterwards in the course of this trial, being all faithfully preserved, will, we hear, be offered to the public in a volume by themselves: Only I cannot but relate here, that one of the judges, in arguing for the competency of the court, expressed himself thus: I knew a gentleman of twenty, who, at one of the English colleges, was flogged and scourged till his skin was torn; and another, who, within six weeks of his being a member of the House of Commons, was stripped naked, and lashed in the

college, till the blood ran plentifully from his breech to the ground. And, upon the relevancy of the indictment, I have, said he, seen the place where Calas was butchered; and have stood with pleasure upon the spot of ground where St. Dominic set up the inquisition. Another of these judges, speaking of the same relevancy, maintained, "that when two objects or ideas, the one contemptible and the other respectable, were set up together to view, the contemptible one conveyed some degree of its contemptibleness to the respectable one." He is wrong, said a Jockey; for when I want to set off a good horse, I set him up by the sorriest jade I can find. He is an ignorant blunderer, said a gentleman, for my wife always chooses a waiting-woman more homely than herself.

Chap. 24. The competency of the court and relevancy of the libel, were opposed strenuously by two of the judges, and somewhat faintly by two more; but sustained by a great majority of the court: And then began the examination of the witnesses, of whom a great number were adduced. It should be remarked here, I believe, that the court had no compulsory to oblige the witnesses to attend: However, all who were cited came, some from religious zeal, some to oblige the prosecutors, and others to support the panel. In this examination Comalo appeared to great advantage, and so far as was possible in such an affair, acquired much honour, and gained the esteem of every person present; for if ever a lawyer had the art and ability of examining witnesses, and making the most of their evidence in behalf of his client, he was undoubtedly the man: From the very looks of men, he seemed to penetrate into their hearts, and knew, either from some previous information, or by the first question put, whether the witness was prejudiced against his client or not: And though perhaps there was no design in any of the witnesses to prevaricate, yet, by cross questions, he made the depositions of

those who were most against his client to bear the marks of confusion, and, as some thought, even of contradiction. Supported by such counsel, and no criminal action or opinion charged against him, the pannel had no reason to fear the issue of the trial.

Chap. 25. Among the first who offered themselves to be witnesses, were four of the judges; and as the counsel for the pannel objected against their being adduced, this point was gravely, and at great length, discussed by the court. Two or three maintained, that no judge ought to be examined as a witness, and that such a step was altogether illegal; but those who were eager to be examined far out-voted the other party, and sustained themselves as witnesses. This was thought strange at that time, and appeared to be more so a little afterwards: For the same professors had first taken a precognition, and then, as it stands expressly marked in their minutes, had found ground for a libel, and appointed the process to be commenced and carried on long before they had put the precognition into the procurator-fiscal's hand, and even before they had so much as chosen a procurator-fiscal; nay, four or five of them deposed, that they had advised and directed the process, and some of them, that they had framed and corrected the libel. So that, besides the pains they had taken in raising the *fama clamosa*, they were, in fact, the prosecutors, the witnesses, and the judges, in this criminal process. The liberty of the subjects of Oceana must, at that time, have stood on a very precarious foundation, if the secular judges did not act more legally than these reverend and inquisitorial theologians. However, the evidence of those professors was taken under a protestation by the counsel for the pannel.

Chap. 26. Before the proof was finished, in taking of which three or four days were spent, Comalo was obliged to repair to one of the capital cities of Oceana, and Fuorgo succeeded in his place as counsel for

the student. This gentleman was at that time very young; and, for any thing I can learn, this was his first appearance as a lawyer in any court of judicature. He was of an intrepid spirit, spoke with ease, and was heartily concerned for the interest of his client. He had engaged in his cause from compassion, from a fixed abhorrence of persecution, and perhaps some resentment of the bad treatment he had met with some time before at the college of Clutha, from the same professors who had commenced and were carrying on this prosecution. In a spirited manner, he attended the examination of several of the witnesses; and when the prosecutor's proof was concluded, he entered a protest against four of the professors being judges in the cause; these were the four who had deposed, as I have related above, that they had advised, directed, and appointed the carrying on of the prosecution, and framed and corrected the libel. This demand seemed to be founded in law, and every person present was convinced that it was equitable; but the professors were no ways moved from their purpose by it. On the contrary, instead of declining to be judges in the matter, as both law and equity seemed to require, they were the only judges who, in the sequel, found the libel proved, judged the student censurable, and pronounced sentence against him.

Chap. 27. After the above protest, four or five witnesses were examined for the pannel: By them it was fully proved, that both in the parliament of Oceana, and in the general society, the greatest liberty of debate had always been allowed and practised; and that the members of parliament and students had ever been in use to reason, with the utmost freedom, upon the most important points of religion; that in these assemblies, the being of God, his providence, the immortality of the soul, and a future state, had often been proposed as subjects of dispute; and that the

students had, for argument's sake, and without being thought liable to any censure, embraced either side of these several questions, and endeavoured to support the side they were to maintain with whatever arguments they pleased. And I can with great truth affirm, that the witnesses who appeared the most favourable to the pannel, as they seemed to have the clearest ideas of the points in question, so they were certainly in rank and station rather superior to those who were less favourable to him; they were either of the superior and most enlightened part of the students, or advocates, or young gentlemen of family and estate in the neighbourhood of Clutha, together with two of the judges themselves. By five or six witnesses, who had been, at the time libelled, in the parliament of Oceana, and had heard the student's speech, it was clearly proved, that no impious or offensive expression, as they judged, was uttered by him. By twelve witnesses all concurring, it was as clearly proved, that the expressions about faith and repentance, and about the inhabitants of Clutha, did not seem offensive when delivered; and that in neither of these numerous assemblies was the student interrupted or called to order, though in one of them there were present seven of the professors, and in both of them a number of the most respectable citizens of Clutha: And besides it was clearly proved, as I hinted before, that till the professors began to take the precognition, there was no *fama clamorosa* in the city, nor any complaint or disgust against the student for the expressions he was now prosecuted for; but that, on the contrary, the citizens were highly pleased with the speech, formed a favourable opinion of the student, as being a lad of parts and genius, and began to think more favourably of the college than they had done for many years before.

Chap. 28. On the same day in which the proof was concluded on the side of the prosecutor, and also

of the pannel, the lord rector arrived at Clutha. It was immediately reported in every street, that he was highly displeased with the prosecution, and that he judged it to be irrelevant and groundless; that he believed there was not so pitiful a kirk-session in all Oceana, which would have commenced a process upon such poor and flimsy foundations. This report was verified by the illustrious appearance and speech which his lordship afterwards made in court: But as that noble lord employed his good offices for a day or two in private with the professors, to convince them of their temerity and danger, and, if possible, bring the matter in question to some amicable issue, I will here, for the instruction and amusement of my readers, faithfully relate some account of a motion that was made by some grave and religious citizens during the adjournment of the court.

Chap. 29. Next day, after the rector's arrival, the inhabitants of Clutha resorted in great numbers to the college-hall, expecting at last a decision of this affair, which had already lasted six or seven days; but, instead of proceeding, the court only met, and adjourned till the day following at ten o'clock. All that was done was a protest taken against the dean of faculty's being a judge, as the rector had never called him to be one of his assessors. There being, therefore, some respite from attending the court, eight or ten of the citizens met at a tavern in the afternoon, and one of them, with great earnestness, made the following motion: Gentlemen, he said, we are every day complaining of the decline of religion, and a growing corruption of manners in this place; and, if principle hath any influence on practice, it is no wonder that vice increases here. Revealed religion hath been attacked and abused by many audacious writers, whose books are by the professors put into the hands of our children; the modern theories of morality are either disjoined from natural religion, or seem to suppose that

there is no such thing; and if there were any thing good in these theories, yet they are so inconsistent with one another, and one of them is so quickly justified out by another, that thereby the obligation to the practice of virtue is miserably relaxed. I am really terrified at what I have heard in your court. The sacred principles of religion, and the very being of a God, are proposed and argued upon as dubious points; and this practice, impious as it is, is adduced by sensible people as a defence for this prosecuted student. All is certainly wrong in this vile college, and, for aught I see, is still growing worse and worse. And I propose, as a remedy, that we in the city shall immediately stir up, and join with the noblemen and gentlemen in this and the neighbouring counties, and instantly apply for a royal visitation. This will cost the government little or no expence; and, as it concerns the religion and morals of this city, and the whole country about, will certainly be easily obtained: By this means, the plan of teaching may be greatly altered, and the useless and dangerous sciences of logic and metaphysics totally exterminated; by this means, five or six of these professors, who are it seems very stupid and unqualified for their respective departments, may be turned out, and sent about their business. It is well, that all or most of them have taken sufficient care to get money; but, though they had not a groat among them, it is not just that their interest should stand in competition with the valuable interests of a whole city and country: They may take up private reading schools, become precentors, teach arithmetic, or follow the business of shop-keeping.— But if a royal visitation is not like to be soon obtained, there is another remedy, though not so effectual: I mean, that our general session should take the matter in hand, should draw up a memorial and petition for a presbyterial visitation of the college. Presbyteries have a right, by the laws of church and state, to

visit all schools and seminaries within their bounds; and, if the presbytery please, they may desire the synod to join in the visitation with them. Do you not see, Gentlemen, that by this visitation some considerable good might in the mean time be brought about? The presbytery might call the several teaching professors, man by man, before them, and examine them strictly about their principles, their knowledge, and their diligence. And perhaps, upon a strict examination, it will be found, that the scepticism and immorality, complained of in the students, is really owing to the wretched principles, the ignorance, and carelessness of the professors; for I cannot think that the youth are naturally worse now than they were in former times, till they become debauched in their principles and morals at this degenerate college. A visitation, Gentlemen! A visitation of one sort or other! By all manner of means a visitation! If we can get a royal one, it is well; but why should we not, in the mean time, with all our credit and influence, push forward the other? for, Gentlemen, the virtue and happiness of our children are at stake. I fear, I fear, there are bad principles instilled! And from what I have heard about the occult causes of this process, I fear there are bad examples set by these sorry teachers: And if the patrons of benevolence are selfish and rapacious, and, of sympathy, hard-hearted and cruel; if the preachers of charity are actuated by revenge; if they who extol justice are covetous and unjust; and they who found all morality on common sense are observed to be senseless, rude, and grossly ill-bred; the scholars must either abhor their masters, as loathsome hypocrites, or else lose all sense of virtue, and sink into the basest avarice, injustice, and cruelty.

Chap. 30. The gentleman delivered his sentiments with an air and manner which commanded the attention of every person present. And though I cannot

pretend to vindicate every expression he used, the company, however, seemed in general to be pleased with his speech, and convinced of the necessity and propriety of the motion he made: And there was one of our company, who himself had got a liberal education, who immediately returned him the following answer: Sir, I suppose you are the more earnest to have the college purged and reformed, as you have two sons whom probably you will send to it soon: For my part, I see nothing unfeasible in either of the remedies you have proposed; a royal visitation may be easily procured, and I allow it is very much wanted; and the presbyterial visitation may be got without delay. But I cannot but tell you that we of this city may look upon ourselves as very justly punished: Many here had not sense to esteem the talents and virtue of Honorio, who was my master, and who, by the superiority of his character, would have been an ornament to any college. You cannot but remember how your uncle and my father often blamed me for admiring and imbibing his sentiments; but whom have you got since that was fit to fill his place? I say nothing to disparage any man's abilities: But, alas! what a downfall at present!—The morals of our people are growing more and more corrupted; and it is grievous to observe, that less pains is taken to establish and inculcate religion in proportion as scepticism and vice are gaining ground. While Honorio was in this college, we had every Sunday evening the pleasure of hearing a lecture from him, wherein a great deal of curious and beautiful learning was retailed; the truth of divine revelation was demonstrated; and religion was set forth in a striking and amiable point of view. At so great a distance of time, I think of this with the highest regard to the memory of that truly honest, benevolent, and respectable gentleman. I can hardly yet pass the college gate without imagining I see him, and feeling a flow of affection to his charac-

ter; for I do from the heart declare, that if ever I saw the value of true knowledge, if ever I beheld the beauty, and felt the constraining power of religion and virtue, it was while, on these momentous subjects, I was hearing the spirited and penetrating discourses of that excellent teacher: I really never heard him without wishing to be possessed of some virtue which he made me sensible I wanted; and if wishing to be virtuous be some degree of virtue, I always came out of his school better than I went into it. But if I hear the lectures or read the books of succeeding professors with all the care I can, my heart is never affected by them: I feel no sort of emotion, nor any desire of virtue, nor even of knowledge. Most certainly our present teaching professors are a very different sort of men. When I hear their dry and confused speeches from the bench, in this trial, I see but too well that they must speak in a languid, drowsy, and confused manner in their classes, and be able to convey but a very pitiful degree of knowledge to their poor unhappy students.

Chap. 31. I have in this history proposed to give my readers as clear an idea as I can, not only of the college, but partly also of the city of Clutha. It is with that design that in my two last chapters I have set down the real speeches of two sensible Cluthanians, and from these it will be easily perceived in what a contemptible state of ignorance, error, and corruption, the college was at this particular period. It will be remarked, that the gentlemen of Clutha spoke of the professors nearly in the same style for which the student was prosecuted. And, in fact, it appears from authentic memoirs and informations, that several of the professors taught in a manner so dry and unentertaining, that no epithet so proper and characteristic as that of *drowsy* could be applied to them. They read over their philological, their dialectical, their ontological, and their pneumatological lectures,

in such a tardy, lethargic, and drowsy manner, that they very much resembled those old nurses who have the art of lulling children asleep. In hearing them, it was really impossible for the students to keep themselves awake. The soporific dose was for the space of an hour so copiously administered to them, that some of them yawned, some slumbered, others nodded, and many fell fast asleep; and it is in history, that sometimes the master himself was seen to nod in his desk, and the spectacles to fall from his nose. This state of the college was so well known in the city, that when any person complained he could not get sleep, the common advice given him was, that he should go and hear a lecture in the college. However, the students were generally so fortunate as to awake by the time the lecture was ended; though this was not the case with a very serious and diligent lad, a month or two before the trial: He fell into so deep a sleep, that the great din made by his fellow-students, when they were gladly running out of the class, was not heard by him; and it cost the professor some considerable time, in pinching his nose and jogging his sides, before he could get him to awake. It was the general belief at Clutha, that the prosecuted student had been alluding to this fact, when he spoke of the "drowsy shops of logic and metaphysics;" and, if I am not mistaken, the citizen also alludes to it in his speech which I have narrated above. But I must now attend the lord rector.

Chap. 32. On the day that had been appointed, the rector repaired to the college, and joined the professors in the faculty-room. The professors were rigged out in their canonical habits, and with the rector at their head, they, with measured steps, and demure aspect, made a solemn procession to the large hall where the court was to sit! A few servants also in black gowns, with flat cowls on their heads, stepped leisurely before them, one of

them carrying a mace over his shoulder, which they called the sceptre wand : Having in this solemn manner traversed the college court, and reached the hall, the rector took his seat, and after a short silence spoke to this purpose : “ It was with great concern that I heard of this affair. I have now been some time in town, and might, if I had pleased, been present at some part of the trial ; but I did not choose to countenance a trial, for which there appears to me to have been no ground, and in which so many irregular steps have been pursued. I am a friend to civil liberty, and I hope to religion also ; and I dislike persecution of every kind. I believe you the professors had no bad intentions in this matter ; but then most of you know little of law, and I am unacquainted with it, for I never studied it. I think, that by this prosecution you have brought disgrace upon yourselves, and upon your university. You have constituted yourselves into a criminal court : Upon what authority have you done this ? If it be by the bulls of ancient popes, these were abrogated by the reformation ; and if after that era any criminal jurisdiction remained to you, it hath been taken away by the jurisdiction act. I think, indeed, that like every other college, you have right to exercise discipline over your students, with respect to smaller misdemeanors, and to censure them by admonition, rebuke, or even expulsion ; but if any student commit any great crime, he, like other subjects, is to be tried in the courts authorised and established by law. By the form of this trial, you seem to be aiming at some severe punishment ; and yet it is only words or expressions you have libelled, which, in my judgment, are not actionable or cognosceable in any court of law, nor merit any sort of censure. I fear this prosecution, contrary to your intention, will appear to be ecclesiastical tyranny. I know not what to do in this matter : I had before me last year the case of a

foreign student, who had insulted one of you by throwing off his periwig, and that affair was happily ended when I sat in a court of this kind ; and now you are proceeding in this other trial. Had I foreseen there would be so much business for me, I would have named other sort of assessors than you ; for except one gentleman, I believe none of you pretend to know law ; I would have named, indeed, men of liberal education, and of liberal ideas also ; I would have named the lords of justiciary, and the sheriff depute of the county. I know not what to do in this matter. Were I to do any thing, it would be to throw the libel over the bar, and assilzie the student immediately ; but even that would be to acknowledge the legality and competency of the court : As I cannot do so, and as I cannot countenance your proceeding in this trial, I will enter a protest, and immediately leave the court."

Chap. 33. The lord rector spoke at great length, and delivered many noble sentiments on liberty, and against civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, which I am sorry I have not room to relate at large. There were present two professors, who, from the beginning of the affair, had been uniformly of the same opinion now expressed by his lordship ; both with respect to the relevancy and the competency of the court ; and it was visible to every spectator, how the countenances of these two gentlemen brightened up, whilst the rector was speaking ; but the majority were in a confounded pickle : One of them gnawed at his tobacco, and his face turned quite livid ; another's face was downcast, and as red as blood ; the eyes of one sunk into his head, his cheeks clang inwards, and his complexion was black as if he had been in a swoon ; another rapped upon the lid of his snuff-box, and in taking snuff, beat so violently with his finger and thumb upon his nose, that it fell a-bleeding ; and one of them was so dreadfully scared and terrified, that

he was carried home to his bed and never returned to see the issue of the trial. The rector, as he had threatened, entered his protest, and promised to give in his reasons in proper time; and the principal musti or faquir of the college, protested for liberty to answer the rector's reasons, when they should appear.

Chap. 34. Abashed as the judges were, they were unwilling and ashamed to desist. Fain would they have got out of the perplexing embarrassment in which they were: Often did they wish they had never set on foot such a shameful and groundless prosecution: And it is believed in Clutha, that they blamed and upbraided one another for that violent spirit, and ungoverned rage, which in truth had actuated them all, though perhaps they were not all equally blameable; but it is certain that all that party believed they had now gone too far to think of stopping: However, though they had constituted themselves into a criminal court, though they had chosen a procurator-fiscal, though they had hitherto called, and allowed themselves to be called, a criminal court, and always called the student by the appellation of pannel; yet now, intimidated, as was supposed, by the rector, they began to alter their style, and to call the student the defender: And a very merry inquiry was set on foot on the bench, to find out and determine what kind of court they were: On this point, several entertaining speeches were delivered by the judges, which, as I have oftener than oncè declared before, it is not my purpose to insert, I cannot, however, but take notice of a few sentences in one of these speeches. "We are called an inquisitorial court," said the learned gentleman, "but I despise words; words do not alter the nature of things; there is nothing in words; I may call my cow my daughter, and my daughter my cow: But we are not a court of inquisition. We are called a criminal court, but we have only assumed the forms of a criminal court: Neither are we a

civil court, nor yet an ecclesiastical court: But I will tell you what court we are; we are an academical court, that is, a court for punishing crimes in our students, and disciplining them: Our court partakes of the nature of all courts; only a criminal court admits of several things called clemencies, but we of this academical court are not obliged, and it is not in our nature, to show any clemency." This gentleman's speech seemed quibbling and unintelligible, and left very bad impressions of him on the minds of the audience. He seemed to deal much in frivolous distinctions, to have the feelings of his heart stupified by the poison of wrong science, and to wrap up himself in the cobwebs of metaphysics and scholastic jargon.

Chap. 35. I have before narrated how the judges began to alter their style about their court; and now, by degrees, they began to talk gently about the student. They publicly took notice of his parts and genius, his assiduity at study, and his readiness to listen to their directions and advices; and instead of pannel, they now called him the defender. Their civility to him went farther than mere words; for, of their own accord, they brought him a precept on their factor for his bursary, which they had often refused him before: They were determined, however, to proceed in the trial, though it is probable that by this time, they saw they must be satisfied with a gentler censure than at first they had intended. The counsel for the defender (for I shall henceforth, like the court, call him by that name) asked the space of one day to see and consider the proof, and this demand was agreed to. It was his opinion, that though the whole libel, even as laid, had been proved, it could not have inferred the slightest punishment or censure, in the judgment of any unprejudiced person, nor even in the judgment of the prosecutors themselves, if they had not been blindfolded by malevo-

lent passion, by which the exercise of their understandings was at that time woefully damaged and impaired. The depositions of the witnesses I will not insert in this history, both as the matters deponed on were so frivolous, that I fear it was a profanation to cause any man make oath about them, and also because I have been informed that the whole process, with every deposition verbatim, is to be published to the world. However, the proof, as I have said before, turned out extremely favourable for the defender. The indictment, as the reader will have observed, consisted of five articles: In the 1st, the student was charged with talking irreverently or impiously concerning our Saviour; in the 2d, contemptuously of the capital doctrines of the gospel; in the 3d, abusively of the merchants; and in the 4th, of the ladies of Clutha; and in the 5th, that he talked contemptuously and disrespectfully of the sciences of logic and metaphysics, by calling them drowsy.—When the counsel had seen the proof, he came next day and pleaded the cause with great spirit and vivacity. He told the court, “They had brought themselves into a dangerous scrape; that none of the expressions libelled were censurable by any law whatever; that this was so evident, that he and all the world were convinced, that some other *occult causes* must have been the ground of this inquisitorial prosecution; that by a hardy phalanx on the bench, his client had been pointed out as odious, in order to draw upon him the rage of every sort of fanatics; that he had been stabbed with the dagger of persecution, borne down by the hand of oppression, and blasted by the tongue of calumny: That therefore it became the court not only to absolve him, but to take the most effectual method to inform the public that he had been injuriously treated, and had never been guilty of any of those things, which, by means of this trial, people might suspect; that if they would

not do him justice, there were other courts, before which their sentence might come, where such passions as prevailed here had not reached." The counsel having pleaded the cause, it was expected the judges would immediately proceed to consider the proof, and pass sentence. But contrary to expectation, and to the ordinary forms of criminal courts, they said, they would first, as the counsel for the defender had done, take one day to consider the proof: This, it was suspected, was done with the design, that what impressions were made by the counsel might be worn off; and perhaps it was also that they might have time to agree upon the sentence they were to pass. While, therefore, the judges are shut up considering the amount of the proof, the most sanguine part of which consisted of their own depositions, I will, as in a former interval of court, strive to entertain the reader with an account of some of the professors of Clutha at that time. As it did not suit with the plan of this history to insert their speeches, it may be judged the more necessary to give some character of themselves, since they are the principal personages in this academical drama; and, happily, the account I am to give of them, is literally translated from ancient and authentic memoirs concerning them.

Chap. 36. I find it would swell this work to too great a size, and hinder me from gratifying the impatience of the public, should I here insert the character of every professor of the ancient Clutha: But, without any considerable loss to the reader, I may safely abridge this part of my work; for, at that particular time, the teaching professors of Clutha, though they differed in many respects, yet, in many respects, they very exactly resembled one another; their temper of mind, their air and manner, their taste and genius, were much alike; in the love of money, and some other plebeian passions, they were perfectly si-

milar: And if the reader will but make allowance for the different departments which they filled, he will be enabled to form a pretty exact judgment of them all, from the single character which I have faithfully transcribed and set before him.

A philologus, or commentator, is one who is regarded merely for his skill in the dead languages. In early years, he discovers what business he is born to pursue. With a satchel of books on his back, he goes regularly to the parish school, and keeps time so exactly, that he serves the neighbours instead of a clock. The bell-man sees him pass by, and says to his wife, that lad is diligent; he will certainly be a deep scholar. At the fire-side he repeats his Latin; his mother hears him; looks at him with wonder; and fears he will not be long-lived. Though dull and slow of apprehension, he labours to supply that defect by a grave and tedious application. In the school, he is never caught looking off his book; and he has the whole grammar perfectly by heart. He reads Ovid, Sallust, and Corderius, all with the same tone and cadence; and never omits to conjugate and decline every verb and noun that comes in his way. When he comes to the college, he stares at the masters with the most profound admiration; considers each of them as a walking library, crammed to the throat with Greek, and Latin, and philosophy, and wishes he may some time be one of them. He is continually poring over books in his chamber; preys with an undistinguishing voracity on every thing that is ancient; but Greek especially, dark Greek, in the dismal editions of Froben or Aldus, is his supreme delight. He reads through the Greek Testament all in a day, and boasts of it as a notable exploit in learning. When he enters a bookseller's shop, he looks with contempt on the modern books that glitter on the upper shelves; he casts his eyes toward the lower regions, where stand the heavy folios, the ponderous lumber of an-

cient erudition. He rummages the dark corners of the shop, and drags from their dusty retreat, Gruterus, Hoffmannus, Becmannus, and Lindenbrogius, and a whole legion of obscure commentators. By this conduct, he in time becomes distinguished as a great scholar, and is thought fit to be a professor in the college of Clutha. Then he assumes a dogmatical air, finds fault with Bentley's edition of Horace, and ventures to decide in certain points disputed among the commentators. He values himself for his illustrations of some passages in the epodes of Horace, which none but himself would choose to read to the youth. He computes the time in which Virgil wrote the *Æneid*, and finds, by a nice calculation, that he composed a line and a quarter, or about seven words and a half, *per diem*. He reads the most striking parts of the best writers without the least emotion. No passage in Virgil can excite his pity; none in Terence, Plautus, or Horace, can extort a smile from him. He declares that he is charmed with Cicero's Orations, and recommends them to his scholars, for the knowledge of the Roman antiquities that is to be drawn from them. He hears people talk of taste, and he talks of it too; but which of our modern dramatists, says he, can be compared with Lycophron? or who ever composed three thousand comedies as Menander did? He reads over all the ancient commentators on Plato and Aristotle for his amusement, and calls them the grand magazine of human knowledge. If he turns preacher, he disdains to read out his text in the usual way; he bids his audience look for the motto of his dissertation in the penult verse of the antepenult section of the apocalypse. He joins together the most jarring and discordant ideas; and his style is mere rustian and bombast. He figures himself standing on the verge of immensity; and talks about the friendship and disinterested benevolence of the Logos, and the energetical and plastic influence of the Pneuma.

In history, he confines his reading to the Byzantine historians, and declares them infinitely superior to Tacitus and Livy. He talks about numbers of Greek and Latin authors as well known to him, whom nobody ever heard of. In short, all his reading lies in such books as nobody else reads; and, for some cause or other, he never gives his opinion concerning any modern book. He conceals his want of discernment, by an affected contempt of every thing written since the days of Procopius, except some things of Vida and Fracastor. In common life, he is a stranger to all the forms of business. All his ideas are extravagant and wide of truth and nature. He affects to talk of agriculture, and pronounces Virgil's *Georgics* to be the only complete treatise upon the subject, and pities our ploughmen that they cannot read it in Latin. In laying out a farm, he sagely proposes fifty acres to be sown with onions, and forty for cabbage plants. To make five thousand pounds a-year by a dairy, he will tell you, is the easiest matter in the world; he talks of it with a careless certainty; for—he saw it in the *Philosophical Transactions*. His conversation is dry and insipid; and turns upon a few anecdotes about Bentley, and Burman, and Julian the apostate, and Jamblichus the Pythagorean. Sequestered from the world, and conversing chiefly with musty authors, he becomes equally callous in his feeling and insignificant in his person. If to such useless attainments and plumbeity of intellect, a sour and morose temper happens to be united, his character is detested as well as despised; but if he possesseth a quiet and sedate disposition, or what Swift calls an aldermanly discretion, which is generally the case with men of a heavy understanding, he passeth among his acquaintance as a good enough sort of man; and, among the illiterate part of mankind, his grave and humdrum aspect procures him the reputation of a deep scholar.

Chap. 37. The judges having now seen the proof, came next day to court to judge of its amount. They considered the libel, article by article, whether or not it was proved; and though many people believed it was evidently disproved, even by the witnesses adduced against the defender, yet it was visible, that the majority were resolved to decide rather according to their own depositions, and those of a very few who seemed to agree with them, than by the evidence of a very great number of witnesses, who deponed, with respect to several circumstances, very differently from them. The first article was culpable by implication only. The student was accused of having meant our blessed Saviour, by the expression, "the son of Mary." This was said to be, in a literal sense, making a man an offender for a word. Two of the judges strenuously contended, that as this was only an implied crime, no court of law could punish or censure a man for it; and that, though the defender had meant as was alleged, no irreverence or disrespect could be intended, since it was clearly proved, that, at the time libelled, he was speaking seriously upon a grave and important subject; by the majority, however, this article was found proved. The second article was unanimously found not proved. The third and fourth, concerning the merchants and ladies of Clutha, were, like the first, blameable only by implication; they were supposed to refer to a city different from Clutha; and, notwithstanding very strong objections were made by two of the judges, these articles were also found to be proved. The last article, concerning "the drowsy shops of logic and metaphysics," was unanimously found proved. With respect to the articles found to be proved, there were two judges, so often mentioned above, who delivered pretty long speeches, showing, that, in their judgment, these articles were not at all proved. These speeches I would insert, or at least part of them, had that been

consistent with the plan I have laid down to myself. Both of them were manly and liberal, and displayed such knowledge in law, and such generous and Christian sentiments, as did honour to the speakers, and would both instruct and entertain my readers. When these two gentlemen saw, that, in opposition to their opinion, four of the articles of the indictment were found to be proved, they protested against that judgment of court, by which step the four professors * who had been witnesses, were the only judges left to consider and determine what should be the censure, and to pronounce the sentence. There was indeed, by this time, another of the professors † who had mounted the bench; but though he seemed favourable to the defender, yet, because he had not heard the witnesses examined, he declined to judge either with respect to the proof or the censure; another of these professors ‡ was all the time of the trial absent from Clutha; two of them § were in the city, and had been once or twice on the bench at the trial, but did not choose to attend till the end of it. And the judge ¶ I mentioned before to have been frightened by the rector's speech, continued to be sick, and did not return to the court.

Chap. 38. The four professors who had been witnesses against the student, were, for the causes I have mentioned, the only judges who were to determine the censure and execute the sentence. The vice-rector ¶, indeed, who was preses of the court, was known to be of the same sentiments with them. Expulsion, it was believed, was the punishment they designed when they began the prosecution; but, from various causes, they were by this time softened or intimidated to a very great degree. When the first motion was made about this affair at a college meeting, one of the pro-

* P——l L——n, Mr. A——n, Dr. W——n, Dr. R——d.

† P——r T——l. ‡ Dr. W——mf——n. § Dr. St——n, T——n. H——n. ¶ P——r C——w. ¶ M——r M——d.

fessors protested, that as there was no *fama clamosa* in the city, those who moved for the inquiry should be held as the informers, which had made them stop or proceed slowly for some time.—A great number of the most wealthy inhabitants of Clutha had engaged to support the student to the utmost length—Comalo and Fuorgo had appeared in his defence—the rector had, in very strong terms, declared himself against the prosecution—it was evident, from the air and behaviour of the spectators, that they believed the prosecution to be ill founded, ridiculous, and oppressive—and, except the depositions of the four judges, the proof had come out very short of what they had expected. When, therefore, the preses put the question, the professor or judge who spoke first, said, That as it was the first offence given by the offender, and as there were many circumstances proved which alleviated the offensiveness of the expressions libelled, it was his opinion, that the defender should be rebuked and admonished; and to this motion the other three judges agreed. Then the preses dictated the sentence, which was said to have been agreed upon in private before the court met, and which run in these terms, “That the student should be rebuked for disrespectful, petulant, and abusive expressions, and admonished.” And the judge who had spoken first on this point, argued, that it would express his meaning better if the sentence were worded thus: That the student be rebuked for expressions disrespectful to religion, petulant to the inhabitants of Clutha, and abusive of the learned sciences. But in this he was overruled, and the form of the sentence dictated by the preses was approved.

Chap. 39. Besides the preses and the four judges, who were to give decision in this trial, there were three more at that time upon the bench; the two *, who, by the protest they had entered, had precluded

* P——r M———r, D——r W———t.

themselves from voting as to the censure, and a third, who had been attending some assembly in Oceana, and had purposely, as was suspected, kept himself absent from the greatest part of the trial: He was, as I have narrated, against the prosecution, believing there was not sufficient ground for it; but though he declined to vote, for the reason mentioned above, yet, when the court was considering what the censure should be, he made a short speech, by which he plainly discovered what were his sentiments about the expressions libelled. There was, he said, a preacher in the presbytery of D——, who was upon his second trials, and had got for his text, “The Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings;” in discoursing on which, he said that our Saviour was improved in virtue, by means of his sufferings: The presbytery were displeased, and took the young man to task: But when he told them his meaning was, that with respect to his human nature only our Saviour was improved in virtue, the presbytery were satisfied with the explication. He added, there was a reverend gentleman who said in a sermon, that God is not properly a virtuous being: This seemed a strange expression; but when the gentleman was spoken to about it, or came to explain himself, he said, that virtue supposed some struggle, or some difficulties which the agent was to overcome; that, in this sense of the word, the Deity could not properly be said to be virtuous: And this explication also, though he still doubted about the fitness of the expression, went far to give satisfaction; for every man, he said, hath a right to explain his own words. These two short stories appeared to be extremely apposite to the point in question, or what was charged in the first article; and the spectators seemed much pleased with them; and the last story had some poignancy in it, because the sermon it alluded to had been delivered by one of the judges, who was now too warmly incensed against

expressions, which, at the worst, were not more exceptionable than his own.

Chap. 40. The whole burden of the affair now lay upon the four judges and the preses; and it was evident they could obtain no honour by the sentence which they were going to pronounce. The spectators were visibly prejudiced against them, and they saw plainly that the game they had hoped to catch was escaping out of their fangs: It is not therefore to be wondered at that they were displeased with those who had helped to render their situation so disagreeable, and to disappoint them of their aim. One of them made a speech, reflecting upon the defender's counsel, and informing the crowd, that a year or two before, when he was a student at the college, he had for his ill behaviour been put in prison: Another of them, after taking notice of the defender's merit, and that he believed him to have imbibed no bad principles in religion, said several things which gave offence; he talked much about petulance and ill-breeding; and, as he had several times done before, put the student in mind that he enjoyed a bursary. He alleged, that the student was an *esprit fort*, and that, by appearing to be such, he had recommended himself to the gentlemen of Clutha, who had engaged to support him; for, said he, though a man believe religion, there are many people who like him the better because he doth not seem to believe it, nor to be much in earnest about it. This speech, which was dry, tedious, and seemed to have been studied, was all of a piece with the few sentences of it which I have set down. It appeared to every person to be invidious, and to spring from ill temper, or malevolence, or some defect of understanding. It occasioned an uproar upon the bench, and tumult in the court-hall. One of the judges, with great vehemence and emotion, said, The gentleman who spoke last talks of petulance and ill-breeding; I leave his breeding to his own conscience,

but I speak of justice : His words are more the ground of a process against him, than all the expressions with which the student hath been charged : He calls him an *esprit fort*, that is, in the common use of the word, an unbeliever ; and he hath pointed out all the gentlemen of this city who have supported him, as abandoned and irreligious. The gentleman marked down the expressions just as they were uttered in court, and showed them to the rest of the bench : The judge who had spoke them tried to soften them, and to vindicate himself, but was thought to do himself harm by his apology. This metaphysician had, it seems, prosecuted visionary speculations with so much avidity, that he seemed to have lost all delicacy and sense of manners, and to have but a very ordinary share of common sense left him. However, the audience were greatly relieved when they saw the tumult ended, without coming directly to blows.

Chap. 41. By the tumult which had happened, the procedure of the court was for some time interrupted. but that tumult being happily appeased, the business was resumed. And, first, the counsel protested, that the defender's acquiescing in the sentence should not be construed as a departure from the right he had to prosecute the college before the Court of Session for the recovery of damages and expence. Then the judge, who had contended for the alteration in style, mentioned above, proceeded to be the executioner of the sentence. He was visibly in great confusion ; he spit ; he looked at the paper which contained his own form of the sentence ; threw it down on the desk before him ; took up the other form of the sentence ; threw it down also, and took up his own again. He called upon the defender, who stood up, and he began to tender the rebuke in the words he had formerly proposed ; but he was checked, and forced to confine himself to the form which the court had agreed upon. " I rebuke you," he said, " for disrespectful,

petulant, and abusive expressions, and admonish you to avoid the like for the future." Then the student made a short speech, in which he said he was not exempt from faults; if so, he would be more than a man, more than a philosopher; that he hoped he had given little cause for this unparalleled trial: He thanked the judges who had thought favourably of him, and the gentlemen of Clutha who had befriended and countenanced him. Upon which, there was the most universal and loudest plaudit of the kind that perhaps was ever heard: Six or seven hundred people rapping on the floor with their feet, and clapping their hands, raised so loud a noise, that the whole hall rung and rebounded, and the sound was echoed back from the opposite side of the college-court, where the steeple was.

Chap. 42. Nothing now remains to complete this narrative, but to take notice of a squabble which happened betwixt the counsel and that judge, who, as I have said, had thrown out some reflections against him. The counsel, highly provoked, had demanded of the court to hear him, and to do him justice; and boldly told them, that, if they should refuse, he would do himself justice in the college area, before all these spectators, in whose presence he judged himself to have been affronted. An internuntio had passed five or six times between the counsel and the judge; some cards also were exchanged between them; and the judge, convinced, as it should seem, of his indiscretion, or afraid of consequences, was willing to make some concessions. Then the counsel stood up: "If (said he) this court declines to hear me, I will address myself to this numerous audience. The gentleman hath taken it amiss, and believes I meant him, when, in the course of the pleading, I alleged that the depositions of some of the witnesses smelled strong of prevarication. It is what I had a right to say in behalf of my client; and I will publish these depositions,

and let the world judge whether they smell of prevarication or not. The gentleman hath told here, that I was imprisoned by the college; and this audience, or some of them, might go away with a belief that I was imprisoned for some immorality or crime; but I was imprisoned for espousing the cause of a friendless and innocent foreigner, who had been basely affronted, insulted, and oppressed, in this very place. And, instead of being ashamed of it, I should rejoice to be every week imprisoned in such a cause. And I went to prison, for a few minutes, of my own accord; for if I had not consented to it, I knew well that this court had no right, and dared not to imprison me or any man in their steeple." There was a hush or deep silence in the house whilst he was speaking, and the public favour run so strongly towards that side of the question, that the audience gave the counsel a plaudit almost as universal and loud as that which they had given before in behalf of his client.

Chap. 43. In imitation of some grave historians, I intended to have finished out this history with a large conclusion for the instruction of my readers; but the narrative part hath been so long, that I have but a few empty pages: And though I be short on this part of my work, I hope I shall be excused; because I presume, that from the facts, as I have truly stated them, reflections are so obvious, that, without being pointed out, they must occur to the reader. Every man will lament that there should have been such faction in the ancient college of Clutha, and be convinced that it was from faction that this very trial took its rise. Many will suspect, that, whilst the two parties were each of them violently contending to overbear the other, the student was unmercifully jostled between them, and that his situation somewhat resembled that of a great man, who, between Pharisees and Sadducees, was in danger of being pulled in pieces. And, as in the issue, though expulsion had certainly

been aimed at, the student was dismissed with an admonition and rebuke, is it not a pity that this censure was not administered in private? Though the expressions were improper, yet the lad was young; it was his first offence; he was sorry for it, and made submissions. Or, after the trial was begun, is it not a great pity that the masters did not accept of the explication of terms given in to them in court, and embrace the offer made them by Comalo? This was evidently their interest; for from the beginning of the trial to the end of it, they appeared more like panels than the student, who indeed supported himself through the whole of it with a manly assurance. If by this prosecution the masters designed to extend and establish their authority, they took a very improper method to do it, and have been very unsuccessful. After exerting their utmost strength, they failed in their attempt; for the censure inflicted was next to nothing. It was a stretching of their authority, and authority overstretched is commonly enfeebled. So that if petulant talk, or licentious principles, have really got footing among the students, it is well if some of the most headstrong and thoughtless of them be not emboldened in petulance by the issue of this trial. In short, it is certain that the college acquired no sort of honour, either in Clutha or at a distance, by this prosecution. These and other obvious disadvantages, are the effects of measures rashly entered into, and stubbornly and unrelentingly pursued. Nor am I able to discern any good effect which this prosecution can possibly produce, except that, by the hardships he hath suffered, the student may himself become an instance in proof of the position he contended for in the parliament of Oceana, namely, that *adversity* is a better school for virtue than *prosperity*.

Chap. 44. It hath appeared from the history, that some of the most disgusting expressions thrown out

in court, came from the judges themselves. One of them often told the student that he was a bursar; spoke of his ill-breeding; and talked of his ingratitude; and the benefits the masters had conferred upon him. If the student was ungrateful, or if he failed in reverence and respect for his teachers, he was certainly to blame, and I should be the last person to apologise for him: But it was not by their interest that he had got the bursary; and I have not been able to learn what particular benefits they conferred on him: But, if the benefits they conferred on him had been ever so great, it was unbecoming of the masters to upbraid him with them, or to cast them in his teeth, in that place, and in such a situation. Much hath been said and writ against the ungrateful, and justly too; for ingratitude is a very base quality; but the insolence of benefactors hath been left untouched. This is a chapter which is wanting in the history of tyrants, and in the history of tyrannical, indelicate, and ill-bred persons. There are men so base-minded, that they have no aim in bestowing any favour, but to seize upon, and take possession of the person on whom it is bestowed, and to keep him in a slavish dependence upon them: I pity the man, who, by his circumstances, is obliged to accept of such humiliating and dangerous favours; and I shall ever esteem the Abbe St. Pierre, who, when he was stripping himself of a great part of his fortune, in favour of a learned gentleman: "I give you this," he said, "not as a pension; I give you an absolute right to it; for I don't choose that you should depend on me."

Chap. 45. There is a fundamental particular in the above history, which, I fear, will appear mysterious to the reader; namely, that the college of Clutha should have judged of a speech delivered in the parliament of Oceana; for every one will think, that the speech, if it was offensive, should have been taken no-

tice of by the speaker, or condemned by the parliament itself; and that if college-men, in our days, should thus try to encroach upon the privilege of parliament, they would be pilloried, or have their ears cropped, or be driven like Jesuits out of the country. But, in different ages, the manners of men are supposed to be different; and, to account for the above difficulty, the reader will please to reflect, that the parliament-man in question, was also a student at the college, and was therefore subject to academical discipline: Besides, the greater part of the professors, at the time, happened to be theologians, and every one knows the encroaching spirit of that set of men. How it came about that there were then so many theologians in the college, may perhaps be some time shown to the public; for there is a history in manuscript, composed from the memoirs of Clutha, containing a period of twenty one years and a half, immediately preceding the above trial: In that elaborate work, the factions in the college, the shiftings of factions, the character of the several masters, their different views, the means by which they were advanced, whether by party-work, or purchase, or entail, or court-influence, are minutely inquired into, and described; and it was from the beginning of that period, that theologians began to be numerous in the society, and that its character for literature began also to decline.

Chap. 46. It will appear to the reader, even from the short sketches given in the history, that several of the professors made but a very poor figure in their speeches from the bench. Indeed, the side of the question they had unfortunately embraced, may, in some degree, account for the figure they made; for they stood on ground where they had little or no opportunity for the display either of eloquence or manly sense; like so many fierce gladiators who have not room to wield their arms. They thought themselves

obliged to say something or other upon the several points in question : An unfortunate situation ! To be obliged to speak, to have nothing to say, and to have a desire to appear witty or sensible, are things which may sometimes make very sensible men appear ridiculous. But from the speeches of these gentlemen, and the ideas they endeavoured to express ; and as these of them who had been longest in the college made the worst appearance, I am tempted to doubt, whether or not a college education can have any tendency to improve men in good sense, and useful knowledge, or enable them to form a proper judgment of men and things. At these seminaries, a careful young man may acquire some knowledge ; but then it is a sort of knowledge, of which the greatest part can never be of any use to him in common life ; and the worst of it is, that whilst he is acquiring it, he acquires also, if not a polemical temper, at least a dogmatical air, which is totally disagreeable, whenever it appears without the walls of a college. Colleges were first founded and endowed in the ignorant ages, to support the empire of darkness, of papal tyranny, and superstition ; and they are hitherto upheld and encouraged by the public. But whether these foundations are of any use to promote real science, to improve taste, or form the heart to the love of virtue, is a very problematical point. And when I express my doubtfulness on this question, I speak with modesty and reserve ; and I will be kept in countenance, by the authority and unsuspected candour of a very ingenious writer, who is a professor himself, and an ornament to that learned seminary, which had the wisdom, the honour, and the good fortune to give him a chair. “ We may,” says he, “ be satisfied, from the example of many ages, that liberal endowments bestowed on learned societies, and the leisure with which they are furnished for study, are not the likeliest means to excite the exertions of genius.

Even science itself, the supposed offspring of leisure, pined in the shade of monastic retirement. Men at a distance from the objects of useful knowledge, untouched by the motives that animate an active and a vigorous mind, could produce only the jargon of technical language, and accumulate the impertinence of academical forms."

Chap. 47. I perhaps may flatter myself, that in the choice of my subject, and the execution of it, I have availed myself of the plan and rules for writing history, laid down and recommended by the connoisseurs in belles lettres; I have followed the plan of the illustrious historians who wrote the Catalinarian conspiracy, the Jugurthine war, and the retreat of the ten thousand Greeks. The history which I present to the reader hath unity to recommend it; it describes one great, important, and uncommon action; an action which hath a beginning, a middle, and an end; and, in this respect, resembling a theatrical performance, moulded into proper form, by the directions of the great master of critics. But whatever praise I may merit, on account of this unity, or whatever may be thought of the manner in which I have digested my materials, I suppose my language may appear careless, and my style incorrect. I fear I should make but an unavailing and hopeless apology, should I here declare in how short a time I have translated and composed this work.—When I had hardly put pen to paper, I heard that an ingenious friend of mine had prepared a history of the above trial: And if he had published it, he would have superseded my labour, and the necessity of this hasty production; for, from the knowledge I have of him, I make not the least doubt but his account bears the marks both of accuracy and candour. The facts, indeed, in his history and mine, are and must be the same; though it is not to be expected, and perhaps is not possible, that two writers should set off the same facts with

the very same colouring. I have not wilfully, or to the best of my knowledge, omitted any material fact; nor have I disguised or misrepresented any fact or character whatsoever. I have done justice to the ancient inhabitants of Clutha; and, if the masters of the college, at that time, had less merit than their predecessors in a former period, I have, however, fairly allowed that there were exceptions. And if the ancient professors of Clutha should this moment start from their graves, (which indeed is not to be expected), and stand up, possessed of real life and spirit, and should peruse this history, every one of them, who had merit, would have a right to believe himself excepted from whatever seemed to reflect upon the rest. If any one of them should imagine, that this or that story, or description, or character, was meant of him, it would not be the historian, but himself who would make the disagreeable application: He would demonstrate that he had scarce yet recovered life, or that he was very ill instructed, with respect to the true interest of his own character and self-love.

A

LETTER OF ADVICE

TO THE

FARMERS, LAND-LABOURERS, AND
COUNTRY TRADESMEN

IN SCOTLAND,

Concerning Roups of growing Corn, and of Tacks.

My dear Friends and Countrymen,

I MAKE no doubt but you have a painful feeling of the discouragements you lie under, and the straitening circumstances to which you are reduced. With respect to many of you, your distress is visible in your faces, your habits, and your dwellings: Many from among you have, by the hardships they suffered, been driven in shoals to foreign lands; and many of you who hitherto remain in this poor country, are pining away your days in sore labour, indigence, and misery.

Your misery is occasioned partly by your own folly, and partly by the rapaciousness of the landed gentlemen.

These gentlemen are many of them experienced, subtle, and wise in their generation; many of you are thoughtless, imprudent, and, though frequently overreached, not aware of the artifices they employ to keep you in poverty, or reduce you to it.

Indeed, when I consider the traps that are artfully laid for you, I think it no wonder though you fall into them: You are like young unwary people, who venture to game with old, cunning, and experienced sharpers.

And I presume, that every one of you who thinks will agree with me, that, among all the snares or traps that have been laid for you, no one hath been so extensively hurtful and fatal to you as rouns: And you have even suffered by rouns in many more cases than perhaps you imagine.

There are few of you in farms who have not got into them by means of a roun in one shape or other.

Whensoever a farm is to be let, and the proprietor has the dexterity to raise a competition among you, and many of you come privately, one after another, and bid for it, that farm may be said to be in some sort let by way of roun.

When by public advertisements you have been decoyed and enticed to give in to the laird sealed offers for any of his farms, the tack of such a farm is, in a still more proper sense, disposed of by roun; it is granted to the highest bidder, especially if he happens to be also the most wealthy.

But a roun appears in all its perfection, and to you (if you judged aright) in all its terror, when, in consequence of intimations publicly made at markets and at the neighbouring kirk doors, great numbers of you assemble where the roun is to be held to bid against one another, and thereby to undo yourselves.

At these assemblies, when you are in a blithe humour, the sly rouper takes advantage of your weakness, and disposes of his corn fields; at these assemblies, the lairds have for many years rouned their lands upon short leases, and sacrificed their oldest tenants for a penny more an acre.

By these rouns, the rich, through their wisdom, have been still more enriched; by these rouns, you, through your folly, have been often deceived, and many of you reduced to straits, necessity, or want.

In fact, a roun of growing corn, or of a tack, however profitable it may be to the rouners, is, with re-

spect to you, a dreadful engine of circumvention and oppression.

To give some check to the progress of this oppression, and to lessen your misery, if I had any hope of success, "I would expostulate a little with our country landlords, who, by unmeasurable screwing and racking their tenants all over the nation, have already reduced the miserable people to a worse condition than the peasants in France, or the vassals in Germany and Poland; so that the whole species of what we call substantial farmers, will, in a very few years, be utterly at an end." But I have no hope, that those gentlemen who pocket such unconscionable sums by rousing their lands and crops, would attend to any thing I could lay before them: For though this practice of rousing, especially considering the insidious way in which they manage it, is confessedly ignominious and oppressive, and must, at the long-run, work their own ruin, yet the immediate profit they make by it will hinder them from giving it over.

But I am almost confident you will listen to me: Many of you have been great losers, others of you have been completely beggared by means of these insnaring rousps. I hope to convince you of your past rashness and folly, and to give you such advices how to behave with respect to rousps hereafter, as will, through God's blessing and your own prudence, enable you to redress all the intolerable grievances and discouragements you lie under, and to spend your remaining years comfortably, without being obliged to remove to the British plantations, as so many of your oppressed brethren have already done.

What I intend to say to you is, next to your duty to God and the care of your salvation, that which of all other things doth most nearly concern both you and your children; and therefore I cannot but exhort and beseech you to read this paper: I have ordered the printer to sell it at a small price.

There is one thing for which you are highly blameable : When a person writes with no other design than to do you good, you will not be at the pains to read his advices ; and you neither know, inquire, nor care, who are your friends or who are your enemies ; nay, you often mistake the one for the other. I can live, thank God, in a tolerable way, though the price of grain be dear, and the rent of land ever so high : I can expect no benefit from you, neither can I reap any advantage from what I now write, except the satisfaction of imparting some useful and necessary advices to a numerous class of people, who are of the utmost importance in society, but who are circumvented and oppressed by their superiors, and rendered miserable by their own folly. I cannot but pity your present condition ; but I hope to see you in better circumstances, if you will behave as you ought.

A roup, especially that kind of roup by which you are impoverished, is commonly the child of avarice and imprudence, fostered by cunning. In some countries, the origin of it is very ancient. In old times, when a powerful and merciless people had conquered some of their neighbours, those who were not slaughtered on the field of battle were condemned to perpetual slavery, and, like beasts, sold by auction to the highest bidder ; an inhuman and barbarous trade ; and accordingly the auctioneer was held in universal detestation and abhorrence. In those days, human creatures were, by auction, enslaved at once ; now, by that same trade, you are stripped of your substance, and somewhat more slowly indeed, but as fatally and effectually, reduced to beggary, and condemned to slavery for ever.

In this country, rouns, at least such rouns as I speak of, have not been long in fashion : For ought I know, it is but about forty or fifty years since this stratagem of getting money began to be in use ; and then too our lairds would have disdained to enrich

themselves by so debasing a trade: It was when a farmer had given way, or died, and left his children unfit for labour, that, in order to help him a little, or to support his children, his friends and neighbours were, from mere pity and humanity, prevailed upon to make a roup of his effects: And it was even with difficulty that the near relations of the deceased agreed to raise money for destitute children by a method which was then accounted disgraceful and beggarly: For a roup was held to be a sort of importunate, but a genteel way of begging; a soliciting for charity, an application to the country-side to make a contribution for a poor family: And it was believed, that those who called the roup expected that those who attended it were, from charity, to give much more for things than they were worth: Besides, it was cattle, household furniture, and the implements of husbandry, that were then roup'd; the crop was given over to the purchaser at the very price at which sworn birly-men had appraised it.

But the customs and opinions of the world are very different from what they were fifty years ago: In this age, it is not the country people, but your lairds and gentlemen, who are the chief dealers in roups, and they are no way ashamed of the business: At every roup they make, they cheerfully submit to become a kind of beggars; and, as if needy of some charitable supply from you, they solicit for their lands or growing corn more than either is worth, or you are able to pay. When a poor tenant is beggared by his landlord, and offers to dispose of an old horse, or an useless watch, by raffle, you grudge not, you ought not to grudge to become subscribers; you are acting from charity, and contributing to the assistance of a fellow-creature in distress: But when a rich laird tries to wheedle you out of your senses at his roups, I cannot for my life see any reason for your parting with your money to gratify his avarice. A roup carried on by

him differs little from a thigging bout, which, they say, is to this day usual in some parts of Scotland: When the laird is to buy a commission for his son, or to get a daughter married, he sends his liveryman, and his ground-officer, through among his tenants to thigg, that is, to beg, extort, force, as much money from them as will answer his purpose, and help him out at a dead lift.

The diminutive opinion which a laird who rouns his tacks and his corn fields hath of you, needs not tempt you to give him your money, unless you get its worth in return: And such a one hath certainly a wonderful opinion of his own understanding, and a proportionable contempt of yours, when he essays to fuddle and impose upon you in matters which you know much better than he can do: You must know the yearly value of a farm, or the value of a corn field, better than almost any laird in Scotland, as you have been conversant in these things from your youth. Neither hath he any greater regard for your persons, or concern for your subsistence: If he can get the money which at his rouns you engage to pay him, it is likely he will be pretty indifferent whether you shall afterwards be able to support yourselves, or if you and your families shall go a-begging, or starve.

By what I have hitherto laid before you, you may the better perceive from what principle this fashionable trade of rousing farms and growing corn doth proceed; a trade which, as it springs from covetousness, and issues in out-witting and ruining the poor, should not be thought honourable: It was accounted disgraceful and ignominious fifty years ago; and I see no reason why it should not be detested as ignominious still. That which is naturally ignominious or criminal, can never alter its nature and become right: It doth not cease to be criminal, though all the lords and lairds in the world should practise it. The abuse

and profanation of the Sabbath, of which many of our great men are outrageously guilty, is still shameful and criminal: And the trade of rouns, though the lairds have given it their sanction, doth not thereby become honourable. He who abuses the Sabbath, will may-be incline to abuse and distress the poor: He who moreover sells his corn, and lets his farms by roun, is wishing for an opportunity to circumvent and oppress you, if you put yourselves in his power.

Before I give you the advices I intend, I will first mention the different sorts of persons who roun farms or growing corn, or both.

The first, and I believe the most numerous class, are the great or considerable landholders, who roun their several farms in the uncultivated state in which they are. You could not, for many years past, look into a Scots newspaper without seeing some advertisements for rouns of that kind.

In the second class are those landholders, who, having cultivated or rested their farms, take two or three crops off them, which they sell by roun, and then let the farms themselves by roun.

A third class consists of such farmers as, having good stocks, hire large farms, which they cultivate for some years, and then, by way of roun, let them out in small parcels to such neighbouring farmers, or carters, or servants, or tradesmen, as can be brought to bid high enough for them.

There is still a fourth class, consisting of those last mentioned, namely, carters and small farmers, who, having taken lots or parcels of cultivated land at some roun, do, at harvest, roun off the crops to those who may have a horse or cow to fodder in the winter time.

These several sorts of rouns, though now very common, are all of them but lately introduced into this country; and you know that the several roun-

ers do perfectly agree in one particular, which is, striving to set off their wares to the best advantage possible, for which purpose they employ their friends as emissaries, to publish abroad the richness of the land they have to let, and of the crops they have to sell.

The proprietor of a large track of land, some years before the old tacks expire, begins to consider what he has before him, and sets himself to work : He invites to his house, from the different quarters of the country, those who are reputed to have skill of land ; he entertains them liberally ; he shows them the richest parts of his farms, and, having put them into good humour, sends them home to persuade the substantial tenants in their respective neighbourhoods, that his land is uncommonly good, and that great and advantageous bargains will be got at his roup.

The gentleman who hath improved his farms, hath this manifest advantage, that, for several years running, he can show the excellence of his crops ; which crops have also been often observed, and admired by such tenants as wished to have the farms they grew upon : He therefore exerts all his eloquence, to persuade every offerer, that his land is uncommonly true ; that it doth not soon wear out ; that, with very little manure and good ploughing, it will, during the course of a nineteen years tack, bring yearly a full better crop than that which you now see upon it : Or, if he hath only rested his land, or some part of it, he tells you how richly it was laid down in grass ; that he hath every year allowed the second cutting to rot upon it ; that every foggage was little worse than a dunging ; and that it is greatly enriched by being long pastured : And, if he perceives that many of you are desirous to have his farms, he tells you, he is indifferent whether he let any of his land or not ; he talks of the great gain he makes by it himself ; but that he sees such farms would be very convenient and

profitable for you. In this manner, he artfully prepares you to bid at the roup to the full extent of his wishes.

The gentleman farmer, if not prompted by avarice, is at least obliged, by necessity, to use all the above topics to recommend his land, as fit to produce very extraordinary crops: He himself hath a high rent to pay; he must strive to get a still higher rent from those to whom he sublets his land; and it is needless to tell you, that those who were over-reached at rouns, when they got lots or parcels of land for a few years, try all they can to over-reach those to whom they sell the crops of such parcels.

If those who are to let farms by roup, be careful beforehand, to set them off to advantage, you know that those who have growing corn to sell are not less so: Some days before a roup of this sort is to be carried on, the laird or gentleman talks with two or three honest men, in whose integrity and skill you are known to have great confidence; he invites them to dine with him; he puts the glass merrily round, he makes them cheerful, and then sends them to set an estimate upon his corn-fields. The honest men are well pleased, that the laird pays so much respect to them; they think themselves obliged to him; they are in good spirits; and the value they set upon his crops is abundantly high.

When the roup day comes, great multitudes of you hurry to the place of it; you inspect the several plots, and think them valued too high; but, distrusting your own judgment, you confide in the integrity and skill of those who appraised them. The laird appears among you, with a smile on his face; he shakes each of you by the hand, who he thinks will be a bidder; he asks kindly for your wives and your children, which, perhaps, he never did before; and, it is like, he will never do it again, at least, till he is to have another roup. He orders plenty of strong li-

quor to be handed to you before the roup begin, and, by your not being accustomed to strong spirits, and taking hasty draughts of it, you are soon the worse. Being thus prepared for his purpose, he enters a plot of his corn; some of you bids, and a large bumper is given him; a second bids, and he is also served with a bumper; and, being in an uppish and cheerful humour, you bid even beyond the expectation of the rouper, and purchase his corn far above its value.

A plot of growing corn, is, you know, sometimes entered at the very price at which it was valued; in that case, it is impossible for you to make a profitable purchase: But many of you choose to have each plot set up at a low price, that so you may have room to bid often against one another: You ought, however, to know, that, though it be entered low, you cannot buy it at a low price; for the rouper takes care beforehand to employ one or two base-minded fellows, called puffers, white-bonnets, or decoy-ducks, who have orders to bid against you, till you have bid up to the price he wants. And, when you are charmed with the civility of the laird, warmed with his liquor, commended and flattered for your frankness in bidding, and prompted by emulation against one another, you often buy corn at a much higher price than the rouper expected, or the birly-men had set upon it. Being worked up to a cheerful temper, every one of you imagines, that, if the corn be worth the sum offered by the former bidder, it cannot be very dear at a crown or two more; and so you bid, and drink, and bid on and on, till you do what you will soon repent of having done; and repent certainly you must, so soon as the fit of cheerfulness is over, and the liquor is out of your heads.

I appeal to yourselves, whether the above view and representation of a roup is not just: Judge, and condemn me if you find it wrong. Have you not often, at rousps, bought corn at an extravagant price, and re-

pented bitterly when it was out of time? Have not several of you made purchases, when you were so far in drink, that next day you did not remember what you had done, or what price you had made them? Have not many of you, by such purchases, straitened your circumstances, and been forced to live in a poorer way than you would have done, had you never attended a roup in your life?

After what I have now said, I need not tell you, (for you know it) that a roup of farm tacks is conducted full as artfully as one of growing corn. When the laird hath prepared you for his purpose, in the artful manner already mentioned, he will not be a-wanting to himself on the decisive day.

The two sorts of rousing, which I have been speaking of, tend, each of them, (as you know and feel) to your hurt and poverty. But that of tacks is certainly the most abiding cause of your poverty and distress. If one of you loses eight or ten guineas by the purchase of a corn field, he may, by labour, and pinching himself, in time, overcome that loss; but, if he bids, and bids, and gets a farm too high, he must toil, and pinch, and starve himself for nineteen years, which is a great part of his lifetime: His comfort in this world is then at an end. If the laird sees, that, by the produce of his labour, together with his stock, while he goes in rags, and lives on husks, he will be able to pay the rent, he will not suffer him to go away. You may imagine, that the insidious artifices that have been practised, infer a legal nullity of what was done at the roup; but though you can show, that coy-ducks, and all the vilest tricks of imposition, have, in fact, been employed against you, I would not have you depend upon redress before our courts of justice: I leave it to yourselves, to call up to your remembrance, how some of you have been treated, when you dared to go to law with gentlemen of rank or fortune: You are of no consequence in the nation; you

have no votes in the county; you have no friend on the bench; the judges do not know you; you can neither give them expensive treats in public, nor in your own pitiful houses. Whatever criminal, or even illegal methods may have been used to intoxicate and impose upon you, make not the dangerous experiment to obtain justice in course of law; you will throw away any money you have, and, in the issue, find yourselves dreadfully disappointed. You have suffered yourselves to be played upon by the laird; you must even suffer for your folly, and make the best you can of the bargains you have imprudently made.

I have been longer than I intended, in describing the principle, the progress, and issue of a roup: But I may, for that reason, shorten the remaining part of my work; for, if the very design of a roup of corn, or of tacks, is to ensnare and trick you out of your money; if a roup is conducted with such dangerous sagacity, and artful address; if it issues in your impoverishment, and often in your ruin; one would think, there should be no need of cautioning you against it: If these roups are so pernicious and destructive to you, will not your own good sense direct you how to behave with respect to them?

I have, however, two advices to give you, which, I am sure, are of the utmost importance: The first is, that, if you attend any such roups as I have spoken of, you never open your mouths to become bidders at them. The second is, that you controul the inclination you have to be at these meetings, and never go to such roups at all.

First, I advise you, that, if you attend any of the roups I have spoken of, you never become bidders at any of them: I know you have a wonderful itch and curiosity to go to fairs and markets, and other places of public resort, where you are oftentimes very ill employed; it is that same itch which carries you to roups: But though you foolishly go to a roup, it is:

certainly possible for you to keep yourselves out of the jaws of the rouser, who is seeking to devour you. This is as possible, and as easy, as it is to be resolutely silent; be but silent and you are safe. Even a fool, when he holds his peace at such rousings, is justly accounted to be a wise man.

This advice, will, I trust, be complied with, as I have with pleasure heard, that at some late rousings of corn, and tacks, in different quarters of the country, you had the wisdom and resolution to behave in the very manner I now advise you to. When the corn, or the tack, was set up to rouse, though the crier bawled and roared for an hour or two, he spent his lungs in vain; you smiled in one another's faces, and kept a decent and profound silence: A significant silence indeed! for it conveyed to the rouser a severer reprimand, than the bitterest language, or most pointed invective, could have done: It was more than if you had openly, and in the foulest expressions, called him avaricious, impudent, beggarly, and sharper. Could you, on every occasion of the kind, observe a like stubborn and prudent silence, you would not be in the agonies of repentance when you have returned home, and you would soon put these rousings out of fashion; and in fashion they would never have come, had it not been for the amazing impudence and littleness of some whom you call great men.

One thing more on this point I peremptorily insist upon; and it is this, that, as soon as you see drink brought to the rouse, either in bottles, or in bowls, or in large tubs, you immediately, and without a moment's deliberation, fly from the place of danger; you may be tempted to take greedy draughts, as you think you get the drink for nothing: But, if it heats you, and sets you a-bidding, you will pay a thousand times its value; you had better, every one of you, sell his coat, and go to a change-house, and get himself drunk with its price. Having drank of the rouser's liquor,

you will be ashamed to continue silent. By the four and angry looks he casts at you, you will think yourselves obliged to bid, that you may make some return to him for what you have got from him. The drink, the drink, will have a sudden and terrible effect upon you, or on some one for whose welfare you should be concerned. The drink will soon impair your judgment, and make every object appear double; you will imagine, that the land, which is scarce worth one guinea an acre, is well worth two; and the corn field, which hardly bears twenty bolls, will seem to you to bear more than forty. A dog will run from the person who tries to put a halter about his neck; an idiot will scamper from those who have flogged him, or have attempted to ram a bitter dose of poison down his throat; and will you, in compliance with a rouser, stay to swallow down his liquor, when you are sure his design is to poison and damage your understanding, that you may bid more for his corn or land than either is worth?

My second advice to you is, That whatever inclination you have to go to rouns of corn, or of tacks, you controul that inclination, and never go to such roun at all. Some of you may find it difficult to comply with this advice; but, let it be ever so difficult, it is manly to crush a foolish inclination, which leads you on to mischief and self-destruction. Let those of you who have most manhood and resolution keep away from rouns, and all your neighbours will follow your example. By this absence, you will be completely secure against all the wiles and stratagems that might otherwise be employed to impose upon you, and every foolish bargain you might be enticed to make. When you have once come to a roun, it often happens, that, by the sight of the company, the efficacy of the strong drink, and many other things, you get into a volatile temper, and lose the command of yourselves; so that you act very differently from

what you intended when you left your houses. Stay at home, and you will be out of danger. If a laird hath a farm to let, or corn field in your neighbourhood to dispose of, you may hire the one, or purchase as much of the other as you please, by private bargain: But, if he calls a roup, he is determined to cozen and over-reach you if he can. If his roup is in the west, run to the east; if in the east, run with all your speed to the west. Though it hath been intimated at fifty kirks, and as many fairs, though ever so many flattering stories have been sent abroad about it, it is all a cheat, a trap laid for you. If you wish well to yourselves, or your children, be sure to keep at a distance from it. If, when roups are called, you will be so wise as to follow this simple advice for five or six times running, I will lay my life, that roups shall soon be at an end, and you will no longer be abused and beggared by this engine of circumvention and oppression.

This engine you may knock in pieces, and render harmless, when you will; for, unless you please, no roup can be carried on: If you keep yourselves away, a thousand advertisements at kirks, markets, and in newspapers, will not give existence to a roup. And what hinders you to stay away? By doing so, you encroach upon no man's right, you abridge not the liberty of roupers in any degree: In newspapers, at fairs, at kirks, at markets, they may every day of the year advertize, proclaim, intimate their roups of tacks, and of corn; only you are not obliged to attend any of them. No laird, or lord, can force you to attend his roups, or to send him sealed offers for his farms. Many odd customs have been introduced to impoverish and herry you; but there is yet no law that strikes directly against your personal liberty. And I am positive, that if you knew what high entertainment you give the roupers, when you are fighting and bidding keenly against one another, just like silly chil-

dren, scrambling and fighting it out on a street for a bad halfpenny which some mischievous person hath thrown among them; if you knew how heartily the rousers laugh, and make a sport of you to their companions, after they have guzzled and over-reached you; you would have little inclination to give them any opportunity of making you their prey and their sport at the same time.

In offering you the above advices, I neither have, nor can have any thing in view but your advantage. Let those who have selfish ends to serve by you, direct your activity to objects where it can never produce any good effects; let them mislead your zeal with a sly design to divert your attention from your wretchedness, and from the certain means which God hath put in your power to remove the causes of it; I disdain any such self-seeking, abusive, and hypocritical artifice. The advices I presume to give you, are plain, practicable, and easy: The effect of observing them is certain, and entirely in your favour. This is obvious to every one of you: Be but silent, and bid none at rous of corn, or of tacks; or, which is safer, and will have a speedier effect, keep away from such rous altogether; and, in a few years, you will have less unprofitable toil, less anxiety, than at present; you will live better, have better clothes, and cleaner houses; you will be able to educate your children, and provide for them; you will have wherewithal to support you in old age, and to procure the assistance of a surgeon or physician when you or your children are sick, which, at present, few of you can afford to do.

But, if you neglect so easy a method to lessen or remove your hardships, you ought not to complain of them: Your whining and complaints, if you will do nothing to remove the cause of them, are childish and useless; if your silliness hath nailed you down to act and suffer as in the years past, your complaints are

as unavailing as the last howls of a dog dissected alive, while he is nailed fast to a table.

But you can do much more than complain; your power in this matter is great and unquestionable. By your silence, or absence, you can, whenever you please, put an effectual stop to these accursed rousps. In truth, it is high time to discountenance and abolish so insidious and beggarly a traffic, a traffic which hath been so hurtful and ruinous to you: And if you be so wise and resolute, as to banish it from the country, the very rouspers must inwardly approve of your prudence and resolution, and your children and posterity will revere your memory.

I will now mention a few of the advantages which must arise to you, from your behaving in the manner I have advised.

1. When tacks are no longer roused in any shape, a sort of golden age will return; farms will be hired in private, as formerly, and land will be got at a reasonable rate, as in the days of your fathers and grandfathers.

2. When growing corn is no longer sold by roup, the laird will be obliged to let all his farms, excepting those which are necessary to furnish grain for his own consumpt, and that which he is to prepare for the market in his own barns.

3. The engrosser of farms will give over that traffic, because, when you have ceased to buy his crops, or hire parcels of his land at rousps, he will no longer find his account in it.

4. As in almost every corner of the country, there are several of you, who, though you have tolerable stocks, are driven from your farms, and living in cottages, these will have easy access to such farms as are not necessary for the consumpt of the proprietor; and also to those farms, the crops or parcels of which the engrossing farmer can no longer dispose of by way of roup.

5. As no tenant will ever be tempted to any very expensive or lasting improvement, while he hath only a short tack, those gentlemen who desire to see the country improved, will grant long tacks to their tenants, which, except we had a law for a new and equable division of land-property, is the only method to improve this uncultivated country.

6. When the laird and great farmer can no longer feed themselves with airy hopes of high rents, and immense gain, by the traffic of rousing farms and corn, they will abridge their expences, and be less hampered in their circumstances than many of them are at present. The land also will be richer when the crops are not roused, and carried off it.

These advantages, and others, both to you and to the public, are visible and certain, if you behave as you ought. But if, after all, the lairds are obstinately bent on the depopulation of the country, and on your ruin, which, in time, must bring on their own; if they will turn their farms into pasturage, rather than suffer you to cultivate them; if, after they have driven away such numbers of the people, they strive to starve the rest, it will then be time for you to look out for dwellings and farms in the British plantations, where there is no doubt plenty of room.

I am sensible there is much in the timing of any advice. People take sometimes fevers or fits of madness and folly, and it is often a long while before they recover their wits. The fever or madness among you, for several years past, hath been rushing into farms, though the rent was ever so high, and buying corn at rousps, be the price what it would. If this fever is now somewhat cooled, I expect my advices will be well received, and be of the utmost service to you; but if the fever still rages with an unabated force, my advices are ill-timed, and too soon offered; in this case, I write to you in vain. If, when the next rousp of tacks, or pieces of land is advertised; if, at

the Lammas time, when roups, many roups of growing corn are intimated at the kirk-doors every where; if, like a man in a bodily fever, who climbs up the slates to the rigging of a house, you run madly to these roups as usual, and first get yourselves intoxicated, and then make ruinous bargains, I shall conclude, that your disease is still in its full violence, and hath not yet taken any favourable turn; I shall, however, be very sorry if that shall be the case.

But if you are sensible you have been hurt by roups, you will certainly avoid them; you will even be at some pains to counterwork the intimations that are made of roups. A rouser is pursuing his interest, when he pays the bell-man to intimate his roup; and you will pursue your interest, when you pay the same bell-man to cry at the kirk-door, at all proper times, "Beware of roups;" or, when an officer goes through a country village, urging and calling upon you to come to roups, who can hinder you to send a louder crier after him, to warn those of you who may need it, by echoing in their ears, "Beware, beware of roups." You have a better right to keep your money than the rouser hath to wrest it from you.

Even a more public warning may be expedient. Roups of tacks are every day advertised in newspapers; and, whatever you have suffered by such roups, you have not hitherto, that I know of, inserted any advertisement in news, declaring your aversion from them. If you are now tired of having been so long abused, and made the prey and sport of rousers, all of your rank, in a shire or lesser district, or in a number of contiguous parishes, or wherever the scandalous practice of rousing is most flagrant, should join with heart and hand, and get somebody to draw up a spirited declaration and advertisement, which should be made as public as possible, to this purpose:

We, the farmers, land-labourers, and country tradesmen in the shire of ———, or in ———, be-

ing sensible, by woeful experience, of the fatal effects of our having been tricked at rouns of corn and of tacks, whereby many of us are reduced to poverty and wretchedness, have unanimously entered into the following resolutions :

1. We will never, at rouns, or by sealed offers, or otherwise, endeavour to get into any farm which the old tenant is desirous to continue in the possession of, because we judge this to be contrary to the golden rule of the gospel : “ All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” Those of us who have transgressed this rule, do sorely repent of it, and resolve never to transgress it again ; “ but to do to others as we would wish them to do to us.” Some of us are, in God’s righteous providence, suffering for having transgressed this rule.

2. We resolve, That, if a laird raises crops not for his own consumpt, nor to prepare the grain for the market, but with the avowed design to roup these crops on the foot ; or, if a tenant hath engrossed farms with intention to roup the crops of them, or to roup the land itself in parcels ; or, if small farmers, or tradesmen, have taken these parcels, and try to roup what grows upon them, we will attend none of these rouns, because at most of them we would run a dreadful risk of being imposed upon ; and, by being at any of them, we would seem to countenance a traffic which is generally ruinous to the purchaser, and always detrimental to the public ; for, by passing through so many hands, the price of grain is unquestionably raised.

3. We resolve, That we will never, in any case whatsoever, go to any roup where tacks of farms, or pieces of farms, are to be disposed of. Many of us have grievously suffered by such rouns ; and we know, that the design of them is, by extorting and squeezing from us far more than such farms are worth, to keep us in perpetual slavery and beggary.

4. We resolve, That when any farmer in our neighbourhood is reduced to poverty by a high rent, or by accidents for which he is not blameable; or, when a tenant is forced, by the rigour of his landlord, to remove from his farm to a distant quarter of the country; and when either of these honest men brings his effects to a public roup, we will attend such roup, and buy such effects at the full value, and even more.

5. We resolve, That if any person now agreeing to the above resolutions, shall bid at a roup, or by sealed offer, or in private, for any tenant's possession, or shall hereafter hurt himself at rouns, by buying corn, or taking any farm, or farms, or pieces of farms, we will look upon such person as a betrayer of our common cause, and a falsifier of the promise and engagement under which he hath come; we will publish his name and place of abode, that he may be avoided and despised; we will not support or assist any such person, but leave him to be assisted by the tender mercies of those to whose avaricious views he hath been aiding and assisting. These resolutions we have, after mature deliberation, entered into, and are determined to stick by them. And these our resolutions and declaration, we appoint to be published in the Edinburgh and Glasgow newspapers.

If an advertisement of this kind were properly drawn up, and signed by some hundreds or thousands of you, and plenty of copies of it sent into every quarter of the country, I am widely mistaken if it would not alarm honest and unwary people, and set them upon their guard, and be an effectual mean to prevent them from ruining themselves at these beggarly and insidious rouns: But, whatever prudent method you take to disperse such a declaration, you should steadily and peremptorily adhere to the above resolutions: And, that you may adhere and stick to them with firmness and unanimity, you should converse a-

about them, whenever a few of you meet together; in particular, you should encourage and beseech one another, to keep away from the ensnaring and pernicious rouns of tacks, and of growing corn.

I will conclude this first letter by telling you, "That whether you shall continue in wretchedness, or render your circumstances more comfortable, is altogether in your own power." The means of relief are obvious and infallible." Nothing is a-wanting but that you act in concert, as men who have their common interest in view. At any rate, you cannot but welcome my sincere endeavours to better your condition; and if, contrary to my intention, any laird or gentleman shall imagine that he is aimed at in this paper, I shall make him no other answer but this, "I did not know, Sir, that you are a trafficker in rouns."

There are other particulars, some of them hinted at already, which it would be greatly to your advantage to consider with attention. If I shall have health and leisure, I assure you I want not humanity and inclination, to warn you with respect to them: And I shall be the rather encouraged to do so, in a subsequent letter or two, if this one shall be any way instrumental towards a prudent alteration of your behaviour with respect to rouns, about which I have given you what I look upon as good advice.

I am, &c.



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